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The Gross-Rosen subcamp system began to develop in October 1943. In 1942, a Gross-Rosen subcamp had been established at the SS-Ersatzbataillon in Breslau-Lissa. In 1943, another 4 subcamps were established in Hirschberg, Treskau, Dyhernfurth, and Fünfteichen. However, the massive expansion in the subcamp network did not occur until 1944, when 60 subcamps were established, quickly spilling over the borders of Lower Silesia. As a rule, the subcamps were established in armaments industries based in Lower Silesia or the Sudetenland or were based in areas that were under air attack or the threat of air attack and so were relocated to Silesia and the Sudetenland. In November 1944, probably as part of the evacuation from Auschwitz II-Birkenau, another 6 subcamps were opened. In the same year, 28 Organisation Schmelt camps were taken over by the Gross-Rosen camp system.

SS-Oberscharführer Albrecht Schmelt, from the autumn of 1940, was the Sonderbeauftragter des Reichsführers-SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei für fremdvölkischen Arbeits einsatz in Oberschlesien (Special Plenipotentiary of the Reichsführer-SS and Chief of the German Police for the Use of Foreign Labor in Upper Silesia) responsible for the central registration of all Jews in Lower Silesia and Sudetenland, with the view to use the “Jewish labor force” for German armaments production. The headquarters of the organization were initially located in Sosnowiec. Later, they were moved to St. Annaberg (Polish: Góra Św. Anny). Altogether, there were 162 Organisation Schmelt subcamps located in or close to industry. Initially described as “Judenlager” (Jewish camps) or “Arbeitslager” (work camps), from the end of 1942, they were labeled as “Zwangsarbeitslager für Juden” (forced labor camps for Jews). From the summer of 1942, following the personal initiative of Schmelt, there were not only Polish Jews in the camps but 10,000 West European Jews from the camps at Drancy, Auschwitz II-Birkenau, and Koźle. It is no longer possible to determine how many prisoners were in these camps.

The dissolution of the Organisation Schmelt and its subcamps was considered as early as 1943 in connection with the realization of the “Endlösung der Judenfrage” (Final Solution of the Jewish Question). Only the most important camps were to be preserved, and they were to be put under the control of the Auschwitz and Gross-Rosen concentration camps. From this collection originate 28 Gross-Rosen subcamps (23 in Lower Silesia and 5 in the Sudetenland). They were handed over to Gross-Rosen between January and October 1944. There were 7 camps for male prisoners (Bunzlau, Dyhernfurth, Hirschberg, Kittlitzi, Waldenburg, Dönau, Wolfsberg), around 13 for female prisoners (Bernsdorf, Gabersdorf, Gräben, Gräflisch-Röhrsdorf, Grünberg, Merzdorf, Neusalz, Ober-Altstadt, Parschnitz, Peterswaldau, Schatzlar, Zöllerthal-Erdmannsdorf, Gebhardsdorf), and the mixed camps such as Langenbielau and Ludwigsdorf. The 6 remaining Organisation Schmelt camps were liquidated, and their 7,110 inmates, mostly women, were taken to the Gross-Rosen main camp. What must be emphasized is that transfer to a new administration was one of continuity and not the creation of new entities: not all Schmelt camps became in fact concentration subcamps, and not all Gross-Rosen subcamps originate from the Organisation Schmelt.

Gross-Rosen in January 1945 held around 77,000 prisoners. It was the second largest camp still in existence after Buchenwald. At this time, 10.9 percent of all prisoners were in Gross-Rosen and its subcamps, guarded by 12 companies of the SS-Wachmannschaft. Gross-Rosen controlled more than 100 subcamps in Lower Silesia, the Sudetenland, and the present-day Czech Republic, as well as in south Saxony (Lausitz). Around 50 percent of the Gross-Rosen subcamps held either exclusively or a majority of Jewish prisoners. Most of these came from the Auschwitz and Plaszów concentration camps or camps taken over from the Organisation Schmelt.

The almost autonomous group of 12 camps near Walbrzych im Euengebirge (Polish: Góry Sowie), known as the “Arbeitslager Riese,” was a special case. Around 13,300 prisoners of different nationalities were involved in one of the largest construction projects of the Third Reich. Here was to be built Hitler’s new headquarters and a new production site for the V-2. The camps in the Arbeitslager Riese included Tannhausen, Wüstejiwersdorf, Schotterwerk, Dönau, Mährischbad, Lärche, Kaltwasser, Säuerwasser, Wolfsberg, Erlenbusch, Falkenberg, and Fürstenstein. Among these were included 3 camps for women.
Forty-five Gross-Rosen subcamps were planned for female prisoners. The transition from civilian guarded Organisation Schmelt camps to women's concentration camp (Frauenarbeitslager), which largely occurred in the first half of 1944, was accompanied not only by an intensive deterioration in the work and living conditions but also with the selection of the inmates. One of the female prisoners described the takeover by the Gross-Rosen administration of the Peterswaldau camp as follows: “Work in the factory suddenly ceased and all the women were chased into the camp. We suspected the worst. We were crammed into one room in the camp. You had to go in one at a time, being beaten by the SS women. In the room there were a few SS men. A circle had been drawn on the floor, you had to undress and step naked into the circle and turn around. The SS men then decided—the oven or work.”

Six or seven women’s camps, taken over from the Organisation Schmelt and located in the Sudetengau, formed a special camp complex within the group of Frauenarbeitslager. They were directly under the supervision of the SS-Kommando Trautenau commanded by SS-Obersturmführer Friedrich Ritterbuch. Some 4,000 Jewish women were concentrated in the camps at Berndorf, Gabersdorf, Liebau, Ober-Altstadt, Ober-Hohenelbe, Parschnitz (and Schatzlar). Seven additional camps were to be added by the middle of 1944, and another two were planned. The number of prisoners would be increased to 11,500. It is not possible to determine the real purpose of this group of camps. Another four Frauenarbeitslager (Birnbäumel, Hochweiler, Kurzbach, and Schlesiersee) in Lower Silesia, each with 1,000 prisoners, was known as “Unternehmen Bartod”: they were involved with the construction of fortifications, probably for the Organisation Todt (OT).

There were no women in the Gross-Rosen camp complex before 1944. By the beginning of 1945, Gross-Rosen, with its 7 subcamps for women, had the fourth largest number of female prisoners (after the Ravensbrück, Stutthof, and Buchenwald camps). At this time, there were 26,000 female prisoners, around a third of the prison population, guarded by a contingent of 900 SS wardresses, who in turn accounted for more than 20 percent of the guards and administrative personnel at Gross-Rosen. Female prisoners stayed for only a short time in the main camp. They were mostly held in the subcamps of which, in 1944, 38 had been taken over from the Organisation Schmelt. Another 3 were taken over in 1945. The new camps established in 1944 included Biesnitzer Grund, Birnbäumel, Breslau-Hundsfeld, Brünnlitz, Christianstadt, Freiburg, Gablonz, Grafenort, Guben, Halbstadt, Hochweiler, Kratzau I and II, Kurzbach, Langenbielau II, Liebau, Mittelsteine, Morchenstern, Ober-Hohenelbe, Sackisch, Schlesiersee, St. Georgenthal, Weisswasser (present-day Bilá Voda, Czech Republic), Weisswasser (present-day Czech Republic), Weisswasser (present-day Federal Republic of Germany), Wiesau, Wüstemiersdorf, and Zittau.

The female prisoners in the Gross-Rosen subcamps came mostly from Poland and Hungary but also from France, Belgium, and Holland. There were also smaller groups of female Czechs, Slovians, Russians, Germans, and Austrians. Just about all the women were Jewish. As with the male prisoners, the female prisoners manufactured armaments. They also worked in the textile industry. In the last weeks of the war, they were primarily involved in fortification works, building tank traps and digging defense lines on the Eastern Front.

The evacuation of the Gross-Rosen subcamps occurred in several stages in the last third of January 1945; all subcamps east of the Oder were closed. The men were sent on death marches to the Gross-Rosen main camp, while the female prisoners were sent to the interior of the Reich. The evacuation of the main camp began in the first 10 days of February, and 25 subcamps were closed. Around 27,000 prisoners were sent to the camps at Mittelbau, Buchenwald, Flossenbürg, and Mauthausen. The subcamps to the west of the Neisse remained and were administered by the camp command, which had relocated to Reichenau (present-day Rychnov). In the final phase, between the middle of February and the middle of April 1945, the prisoners in the Arbeitslager Riese complex were evacuated, and the last remaining camps in Saxony and Brandenburg were evacuated. Around 30 subcamps were liberated by the Red Army by May 9, 1945. Shortly before May 9, the Gross-Rosen concentration camp administration was liquidated, and the majority of the camp files were destroyed.

Around 44,000 prisoners survived the 26 evacuation marches from the Gross-Rosen subcamps. The number who died on the death marches cannot be determined; however, based on prisoner numbers in January 1945, it could have been around 36,000. There were around 10,000 women evacuated from the Gross-Rosen subcamps. The fate of 6,500 of these prisoners is unknown.

**Sources**
For details on individual Gross-Rosen subcamps, see the essay and sources for each camp. Zygmunt Łukasiewicz, in “Gross-Rosen,” BGKBZHW 8 (1965), was the first to write about the state of research on the Gross-Rosen subcamps.


Alfred Konieczny’s studies on Gross-Rosen and its subcamps cover numerous aspects such as his essay “Das Konzentrationslager Gross-Rosen,” DaHe 5 (1989): 15–27; his monograph KL Gross-Rosen (Walbrzych: AMGR, 1994); and his monograph Frauen im Konzentrationslager Gross-Rosen in


Evelyn Zegenhagen

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2. On January 1, 1945, there were 76,728 prisoners in the camp (51,204 males and 25,524 females); on January 15, 1945, 77,904 prisoners (51,977 males and 25,927 females). Numbers from BA, NS 3-439, Stärkemeldungen unbekannter Herkunft, u.a., in ITS, *Verzeichnis der Haftstätten unter dem Reichsführer-SS* (Arolsen: Suchdienst, 1979), p. 24.


8. Ibid., p. 19.

ASLAU

The Aslau subcamp was formed in July 1944 next to a military airfield located southeast of the town of Aslau (now Osła) in Lower Silesia. It was formed pursuant to a decision by the Armaments minister and the Luftwaffe command to make the airfield available to the Weserflug aircraft company of Bremen, which was going to move parts of its Focke Wulf (Fw) 190 fighter-plane production there; the planes were to be assembled in the production halls by the airfield and then tested on the premises. Negotiations began in August 1944 to hand over Weserflug’s operations to Concordia Spinnerei und Weberei GmbH of Bolesławiec, which happened two months later.

Approximately 500 prisoners from the Gross-Rosen concentration camp were sent to the Aslau subcamp in transports on July 14 and August 1, 1944. Only smaller groups arrived in later months, mainly to make up for losses caused by death or transfer to other camps (for instance, at least 76 prisoners were transferred to the Bunzlau II subcamp in November 1944). A total of approximately 680 to 700 prisoners passed through the subcamp (the names of 617 are known). Most of the people within this group were born between 1921 and 1925 (29.7 percent). As much as 89.1 percent of the prisoners were Polish, and 7.5 percent were Russian; the rest were of other nationalities (7 Frenchmen, 6 Germans, 3 Italians, 1 Czech, 1 Spaniard, and 1 Yugoslavian).

SS-Oberscharführer Wilhelm Gustav Fisch was in charge of the subcamp throughout its operations. The camp guards were 33 SS men from the 12th Company of the Gross-Rosen SS-Totenkopfwachbataillon (Death’s Head Guard Battalion), among whom SS men Hess and Walter Flos earned a bad reputation. The prisoner “self-administration” was headed by camp elder (Lagerältester) Stanisław Wójcik, and the block elders of the subcamp throughout its operations. The SS men escorted the prisoners to work in the production halls by the airfield; the work was done on one shift and lasted 12 hours under the supervision of German foremen. Depending on the nature of the work being done, labor Kommandos were formed, such as the Kommando that made parts and put together subassemblies (Arbeitssorrichtung); the detachment that did the final assembly of parts brought in from the outside as well as those made on the premises (Endmontage); the group that built the shooting range for the assembled machines (Schießstand); the Kommando that built access roads and expanded the camp (Kiesel-Chaussee); the transport detachment (Transportkommando); and the group that built the water-supply lines (Wasserleitung). Kapos supervised the prisoners’ work and were headed by Oberkapo Czesław Marszalkiewicz.

The daily marches of the prisoners from the camp to work through wooded terrain induced several of them to make escape attempts; they ended in failure. The first fugitive was caught, then hanged at the Gross-Rosen concentration camp; others were sent back to the main camp and assigned to a penal detachment there.

In the final phase of the subcamp’s existence, a Luftwaffe formation was stationed at the airfield, and a repair Kommando (Leichtmetall) and a group for bomb transport, stockpiling, and installation on planes (Bombenkommando) were formed to support it.

On February 9, 1945, the camp leader (Lagerführer) announced that the subcamp would be evacuated on foot the next day. The march occurred after midnight; approximately 550 prisoners left the camp, while about 50 sick prisoners and those unable to march were left in the infirmary (Rein). The march route led through Bunzlau-Görlich-Bautzen, Kamenz, avoiding Dresden and continuing on via Königsbrück, Gosenhain, Riesa, Oschatz, Wurzen, avoiding Leipzig, then continuing through Eilenburg, Delitzsch, Brehna, Eisleben, Sangerhausen, and Berga, reaching the Mittelbau subcamp at Nordhausen (Boelcke-Kaserne) on March 16, 1945. Some 487 prisoners reached the destination; the rest died on the way from exhaustion, starvation, and cold; others escaped. Because of repeated escapes, the camp leader held at least two executions in which 10 people were shot; 20 people died during the stay at Nordhausen. After a few days, the Aslau prisoners were transferred to Mittelbau concentration camp and sent to work in the local mines. Soon there was another evacuation to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where prisoners were liberated on April 15.

After World War II ended, Aslau guard SS-Unterscharführer Walter Flos was handed over to Poland; on May 31, 1948, the Warsaw District Court sentenced him to death on such counts as killing four prisoners during the evacuation. Aslau block elders Władysław Skiba and Władysław Porzeczkowski were also tried by Polish courts and were acquitted. The trial of Kapo Erich Assmann before a Munich court (Landgericht II) finally ended in acquittal on December 16, 1974. The inquiry against Lagerführer Fisch was suspended due to his death in 1970.

SOURCES The author provides a more in-depth examination of the Aslau subcamp in his Arbeitlager Aslau—podobí KL Gross-Rosen/1944–1945 (Wałbrzych: Muzeum Gross-Rosen, 2001). Primary and other relevant secondary sources are listed in that publication.

Most of the significant primary sources are available in the AMGR.

Alfred Konieczny

BAD WARMBRUNN

The Gross-Rosen subcamp in Bad Warmbrunn (present-day Cieplice Zdrój, a section of Jelenia Góra) was established in 1944. It is very difficult to pinpoint the exact date, but the fol-
lowing statements based on known sources can be used to determine the approximate date when the camp was established:

1. A letter dated June 9, 1944, from the SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA) to concentration camp commanders mentioned that the Dorries-Füllner plant at Bad Warmbrunn employed Gross-Rosen concentration camp prisoners.1

2. In November 1944, some prisoners, including a group of prisoner-functionaries—several Kapos (prisoner foremen), several barrack chiefs, a dentist, a cook, and two male nurses—were sent to Bad Warmbrunn from the Hirschberg subcamp, approximately 4 to 5 kilometers (2.5 to 3.1 miles) away. This is the earliest information on assignments to the Bad Warmbrunn camp. From what was practiced at other camps, we know that the prisoner-functionaries were usually in the first transport.2

Also, when the Bad Warmbrunn prisoner numbers are reviewed, it seems more likely that the camp started operating in the autumn. As was the case with other camps, Bad Warmbrunn was created in order to concentrate necessary cheap manpower in one spot. The prisoners were put to work in the Dorries-Füllner papermaking machine plant, which had been converted over to arms manufacturing. The plant made either ammunition or artillery or both. The camp barracks were located directly by the production halls. There were 600 to 800 prisoners living in the camp, all Jewish males. They were nationals of several European countries, primarily Poland and Hungary but also Belgium, the Netherlands, Greece, and Czechoslovakia.3

It is not known how many transports were sent to Bad Warmbrunn or when they were sent. Accounts of former prisoners mention transports sent in late autumn 1944, November, and December. It is noteworthy that the known camp prisoners were identified by numbers from several different series and had previously been at other Gross-Rosen subcamps. This means that no prisoner transports were sent to Bad Warmbrunn from outside the Gross-Rosen concentration camp system.

The sanitary conditions at Bad Warmbrunn were wretched. A typhus epidemic broke out in late 1944 and early 1945. For that reason, the death rate was very high: several to over a dozen people died daily. The bodies of the dead were trucked away to the neighboring Hirschberg camp for cremation. In late January 1945, two more doctors were sent from Hirschberg to Bad Warmbrunn: Arnold Mostowicz from Łódź and Emil Vogel from Prague. Both doctors had reported to SS headquarters at the Hirschberg subcamp, requesting to be sent to work at typhus-ridden Bad Warmbrunn—a decision infrequently encountered under camp conditions.

As Mostowicz estimates, in early February 1945, of the approximately 800 prisoners living at the camp, only 300 went off to work. The others were either sick or in such a state of weakness after suffering from typhus that the Nazis could not force them to work. The sick, with the doctors and one orderly, were put into a separate barracks, which was cordoned off with barbed wire. They were put under quarantine. Any contact with the rest of the camp was restricted to a narrow passage left in the barbed wire: portions of soup and bread were brought from camp, while it was primarily the dead who were brought out of the infirmary. A report was also provided every day on the number of prisoners still alive. The patients were in a disastrous situation: the terrible filth and lice infestation, along with the almost total lack of medication, gave the prisoners little chance of survival. In addition, the total isolation also meant that there were no opportunities to get extra food, while the small rations assigned pursuant to the daily reports were also stolen. Under those circumstances, the SS men lowered the actual number of dead and would “keep” their friends’ bodies under their own bunks in the hospital for a day or two. That was only possible because the SS men were terrified of infection and did not enter the quarantined area at all. Mostowicz also got sick in late February, so only Doctor Vogel remained active at the hospital.

The hospital was deloused with cyclon in late February and early March 1945. The patients had to be moved from room to room. The operation did not provide the results anticipated, since it had not been done in the rest of the camp at the same time.

In early March 1945, an SS committee from Gross-Rosen headquarters came to Bad Warmbrunn, headed by Dr. Josef Mengele (who was known to some prisoners from their time at the Auschwitz concentration camp). The reason for the visit was the raging epidemic. The committee inspected the quarantined camp hospital, talked with the local SS men, issued a few significant commands, and left. At the same time, another doctor, Otto Lohr (prisoner number 73811), from Olomouc (Olmitz), and medical student Wilhelm Weiselowitz (Weislowitz) (prisoner number 73927) were transported from the Friedland labor camp (also a Gross-Rosen subcamp) to the quarantined hospital. Perhaps that was the only effect of Mengele’s committee. Doctor Mostowicz survived the typhus. When he recovered, he satisfied his hunger by eating powdered dextrin, which the hospital had in large supply (the Germans used dextrin as glue when they sealed the hospital building with strips of paper during the delousing). The epidemic began to subside even before the evacuation. Mostowicz stated that no more than 400 out of the 800 prisoners in the camp survived. Those prisoners kept going off to work. They also helped cart away the factory machines. Only about 80 patients were still left in the quarantine.

In the first quarter of 1945, most of the prisoners were evacuated in two groups to the Dörnhau camp at the Riese complex (which was part of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp). The first group was prodded along on foot; the second—including the sick people from the hospital—was transported by rail in coal cars. The patients from the quarantine were still isolated from the rest of the prisoners and
were evacuated in three separate railway cars. Mostowicz and Vogel rode with the hospital group. The floors in the railroad cars were strewn with a thick layer of straw, which gave the prisoners hope that they were not going off to die. When all the quarantined prisoners were in the coal cars, some workers they did not know made something like roofs out of boards. The roofs were attached to the edges of the coal cars, which made closed boxes out of the cars. The train loaded with prisoners stood at the station for about 5 hours. It then traveled for several hours, after which it stopped, and pieces of bread were thrown into the cars. The transport reached Dörnhau the next morning, having traveled 12 or so hours.

The evacuation claimed many victims, primarily in the group that was on foot. The exact number is unknown. The surviving records only provide information that on April 14 and April 15, 1945, the Dörnhau camp admitted approximately 200 prisoners from Bad Warmbrunn. The sick prisoners were left at Dörnhau. Two days later, the others were moved to the Schotterwerk camp (in the town of Oberwüstegiersdorf, later Głuszyca Górna), then to the Erlenbusch camp. On about May 4 or 5, 1945, they were transported to the Dörnhau camp again, where they were liberated by the Red Army.

Probably not all Bad Warmbrunn prisoners were evacuated. Mostowicz states that a dozen or so of the most ill were left in camp. According to Doctor Lohr, who also stayed behind, the prisoners were evacuated on foot, but they were denied admittance to the new camp because of their exposure to typhus and were sent back to Bad Warmbrunn. Many of them could not endure the hardships of the march and, unable to walk, were shot by the SS men escorting them. Only a few returned to Bad Warmbrunn. No records exist of what happened to them after that.

The camp commander’s name is unknown. The following names of staff exist in court records: Herman Schöps, born on August 2, 1901, was tried after the war and sentenced to two years’ imprisonment on September 29, 1947, by the Jelenia Góra District Court. According to Doctor Lohr, who also stayed behind, the prisoners were evacuated on foot, but they were denied admittance to the new camp because of their exposure to typhus and were sent back to Bad Warmbrunn. Many of them could not endure the hardships of the march and, unable to walk, were shot by the SS men escorting them. Only a few returned to Bad Warmbrunn. No records exist of what happened to them after that.

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**NOTES**

1. Nuremberg Trial records, NO-597.
2. AMGR, catalog No. 5919 DP (account by Arnold Mostowicz); Józef Witkowski, “Dr. Emil Vogel,” *PL* 1 (1968); 179.
3. AMGR, catalog No. DP/5919, DP-A/999 (Daniel Wulkan’s questionnaires and personal findings based on a study of known names of Bad Warmbrunn prisoners).
4. AMGR, catalog No. 108/2 MF (Lechenbuch Dörnhau); catalog No. 2330/DP (patient roster for May 9, 1945, hospital for former concentration camp prisoners at Gieszcze Puste).

**BAUSNITZ**

Originally, there was one forced labor camp (*Zwangsarbeitslager, ZAL*) for Jews in Bausnitz (Bohuslavice nad Úpou, Czech Republic). It was a women’s camp under the authority of the Office of the Special Plenipotentiary of the RFSS and Chief of the German Police for the Use of Foreign Labor in Upper Silesia (Amt des Sonderbeauftragten des RFSS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei für fremdvölkischen Arbeitseinsatz in Öberschlesien), also known as Organisation Schmelt. On March 23, 1944, the camp, in which mostly young Jewish women and girls were imprisoned, was taken over by the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. The subcamp in question was very small, and the number of prisoners remained relatively constant. Initially, in April 1944, there were 60; in July, 70; by October 17, there were 67 prisoners.

The age distribution shows complete dominance by women and girls between 15 and 30 years of age; 53 of the women were from Poland and 16 from Hungary. They had to work in the textile factories of Ignatz Etrich. According to some sporadic sources, the subcamp was put under the immediate administrative auspices of Gross-Rosen’s largest subcamp, Parschnitz. More detailed information on the life within the camp and its end is not available. Despite the lack of informa-
tion, one can assume that the majority of the Jewish women were rescued.


Well-known professor of German studies Ludvík Václavek devoted his attention to a singular event, a theatrical play that originated in the Schatzlar camp among Jewish women from Hungary: “La gi è sen? Literární dokument z koncentračního tábora při želelské předně z roku 1945,” in *Stati o německé literatuře vzniklé v českých zemích* (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 1991).

Basic sources and transport lists of prisoners from the Gross-Rosen subcamps in northeast Bohemia are located in the SÚA in Prague, with copies in the AG-T. The most important are the files of the Special People’s Court in Jičín 1945–1946 (criminal trials against the former wardresses). Finally, there is the firm’s archive at Texlen Trutnov; in the 1970s, its former head, Vladimír Wolf, made accessible to Miroslav Kryl and Ludmila Chládková the most important sources on the camps in the Trautenau area contained in the files of the German textile firm for the years 1940 to 1945. Nevertheless, the sources are inadequate.

Miroslav Kryl
trans. Stephen Pallavicini

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**BAUTZEN**

In the first months of 1944, on the initiative of factory director Dr. Johann Reichert, who had previously “aryanized” the Jewish-owned company after Kristallnacht, the Bautzen-based plant of the Waggonbau- und Maschinenfabrik AG Busch (WUMAG) opened negotiations with the SS-Business Administration Main Office (VVHA) in order to obtain concentration camp prisoners to strengthen its labor force. The WUMAG factory in Bautzen, which belonged to the Flick corporation and was producing railway cars for German Railways (Deutsche Reichsbahn), faced a labor crisis due to the increased call-up of German workers to the Wehrmacht at that time. It was clear that the number of prisoners of war (POWs) deployed in the factory was no longer sufficient, and the company had to seek new labor sources in order to fulfill its production requirements.

Following the deployment of the required prisoners, the WUMAG factory leadership also aggressively tried to obtain a certificate of urgency from the Gross-Rosen concentration camp, which was supplying the prisoners, to help them get the necessary materials for the construction of the prison camp, such as wood, barbed wire, fencing mesh, and nails.

Construction of the barracks camp began on September 29, 1944, by the factory’s own employees. Then, on October 17, a transport of 100 prisoners arrived from the Gross-Rosen concentration camp, which was deployed initially on completing the camp and fencing in the workshops intended for them.

In December 1944, two further transports each of 200 concentration camp prisoners arrived in Bautzen, which brought the total strength of the Bautzen subcamp to 500 prisoners. However, the WUMAG leadership still viewed this number as insufficient and attempted to obtain more prisoners from Gross-Rosen. Apparently, they were unsuccessful; camp records indicate that on February 10, 1945, there were 498 prisoners in the Bautzen subcamp.

The hard 12- to 14-hour shifts in the workshops and carrying materials, the insufficient and scarcely edible food, and the clothing that was totally inadequate during winter all led to malnourishment, physical exhaustion, and diseases such as tuberculosis. Almost every day, the number of prisoners capable of work declined, and the number of deaths increased. In the Death Books I and II of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp for 1945, 28 prisoner deaths are recorded for the Bautzen subcamp just for the period between February 6 and April 10, 1945. The actual number of prisoners who died during this period was much higher, as according to an instruction issued by the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA), the deaths of Poles, Russians and other Soviet citizens, Jews, and Sinti and Roma (Gypsies) were no longer to be recorded. A list of victims of the Bautzen subcamp now held at the Gross-Rosen memorial site indicates 127 deaths. This list is also incomplete, as it is based only on information supplied sporadically by survivors.

Until January 1945, the corpses of the dead were taken several times per week in a factory truck to the crematorium in Görlitz to be burned. Then commandant SS-Unterscharführer Rudolf Jannasch announced his intention to have the corpses burned in the factory furnace, since the approaching front prevented their being taken to Görlitz, but protests from the factory workers prevented him from following through with his plan. In consequence, the SS camp leadership from then on had the corpses driven in a truck to the sand pits close to the Jewish cemetery in Muskauer Strasse,
where they were buried. During an exhumation in 1950, 202 bodies were found there. They were reburied at the Jewish cemetery.\(^6\)

The prisoners were guarded by a force of about 60 or 70 men, which included about 30 or 40 Ukrainian auxiliaries (Hiwis). SS-Unterscharführer Edmund Kersten and SS-Rottenführer Gusa assisted commandant Jannasch as block leaders. Wilhelm Bahr served in a medical rank.\(^7\)

The SS relied upon several Kapos, who were as effective as the SS men in terrorizing the prisoners. Many survivors reported on the harshest treatment of the prisoners by the camp staff.\(^8\) A report by German worker Martin Krause confirms this penetratingly:

A column of prisoners returned from digging trenches. The Kapos demanded that the prisoners enter the camp marching in goose-step, although they could scarcely walk. Once they arrived on the parade ground, they had to form up in several lines. An SS-officer emerged from one of the barracks and called two prisoners . . . by their numbers, to step forward. Two Kapos and two SS-men, each armed with a cable almost as thick as your arm, beat up the two prisoners. When they were already lying unconscious on the ground, they continued beating them. While the other prisoners retired to the barracks, the thugs grabbed the two prisoners by the feet and dragged them to the door of one of the barracks and then threw them inside.\(^9\)

From February 15, 1945, the prisoners were no longer deployed in the WUMAG workshops but in digging trenches and constructing fortifications and tank traps.

Evacuation transports from other subcamps arrived in Bautzen, including from the Gross-Rosen subcamps of Niesky/Brandhofen and Kamenz. The Jewish concentration camp prisoner Roman König arrived at the Bautzen subcamp during the last weeks of its existence, together with an evacuation column from the Buchenwald subcamp Schlieben. He was arrested as a 14-year-old in 1940 and had been through the Kraków ghetto, then on to Radom, and finally sent to Schlieben. While an unknown number of sick prisoners remained behind in Bautzen, he had to set out on the evacuation march on April 19, together with the other prisoners who seemed capable of marching. He wrote:

In great haste we had to load up the equipment of the camp and the possessions of the commandant onto large horse carts. Twenty prisoners had to pull each cart. Initially we went to Neukirk, then on to Neudorf in the present-day Czech Republic [Nova Viska]. Nobody knew for sure, but everybody suspected that this would be our final destination. When we went on parade the next morning, behind the parade ground stood a truck, loaded with machine guns, concealed under a tarpaulin. The camp was to be “liquidated” in the official terminology. However, the local population wouldn’t stand for it. Not on our behalf, but out of fear that the advancing troops might flatten the village, if they heard about the massacre. Still, when the commandant got mad—we had to move on . . . the final destination for us was a former camp for eastern workers (Ostarbeiter) in Nixdorf [Mikulasovice]. On May 8, our guards silently abandoned the camp, even leaving behind their weapons.\(^10\)

During the march, the prisoners who were unable to walk had been loaded onto a vehicle. However, the SS guards shot them in a wood before the group reached Wölmsdorf (Vilémov).\(^11\)


Documentation on the Bautzen subcamp can be found in the following archives: BA-L (IV 405 AR 2261/66); SÚA in Prague (KT/OVŠ 24); AMGR; and ASt-BZ (Rep. XI-NS).

\(^{Hans Brenner}\) trans. Martin Dean

\(^{NOTES}\)


3. Ibid., p. 9.

4. SÚA, KT/OVŠ 24, Totenbücher I und II/1945 des KZ Gross-Rosen.

5. AMGR, DP No. 5036, Lista więźniów Bautzen.


7. AMGR, DP No. 5036, p. 5.

8. OKBZHW, Report, p. 159.


11. Quoted from \textit{Waggonbauer}, p. 15.

\textbf{BERNSDORF}

Bernsdorf (now Bernartice, Czech Republic) was initially a forced labor camp (\textit{Zwangarbeitslager}, ZAL) for Jewish women. It was established in June 1941 and placed under the auspices of the Organisation Schmelt. On March 18, 1944, it
became a subcamp of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. At that point, the SS undertook a selection at the camp; about 200 young women and girls remained, while the weak and sick ones were sent to Auschwitz II-Birkenau (and most likely to their deaths). In their place, in the summer of 1944, came 320 young women and girls in the camp. Hunger, inadequate nourishment, and the heavy labor resulted in a typhus epidemic. Two deaths have been confirmed; two other cases remain as probable.

Cultural activities took place in Bernsdorf. In the “Hungarian” barracks especially there were narrations about literary works (e.g., K. Čapek, H. Ibsen, H.G. Wells) and recitations (also from the dramas by F. Schiller). Two books were also put together of poetry in German and Hungarian that prior to the end of the war had been forbidden.

The imprisoned women were subjugated to forced labor in the spinning mills of the Johann Etrich and Berko firms. The largest number of prisoners, including those in the Schatzlar camp, was reached in the summer of 1944: 425 women, with 323 coming from Poland, 91 from Hungary, 5 from Bohemia, 4 from Slovakia, and 2 from Germany. More than half of them were between 15 and 30 years of age. In Bernsdorf, the prisoners were kept in wooden barracks. As of the autumn of 1944 until the spring of 1945, there was a maximum of about 320 young women and girls in the camp. Hunger, inadequate and constantly deteriorating nourishment, and the heavy labor resulted in a typhus epidemic. Two deaths have been confirmed; two other cases remain as probable.

The SS guards fled the camp on May 9, 1945. Several wardresses were captured by the prisoners. Two of the wardresses were later convicted by the court in Jüčín and sent to jail. The director of the Etrich factory dissolved the camp prior to the arrival of the Red Army, which was enthusiastically greeted by the prisoners on May 10, 1945.

The decent behavior and humanity of camp commander Maria Mühl are worthy of mention. According to former prisoners’ accounts, her treatment of prisoners stood in contrast to the beatings, sometimes sadistic mistreatment, and verbal abuse of others.


Well-known professor of German studies Ludvík Václavek devoted his attention to a singular event, a theatrical play that originated in the Schatzlar camp among Jewish women from Hungary: “Lágr je sen? Literární dokument z koncentračního tábora při řezářské prádelně z roku 1945,” in *Stati o německé literatuře vzniklé v českých zemích* (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 1991).

Basic sources and transport lists of prisoners from the Gross-Rosen subcamps in northeast Bohemia are located in the SÚA in Prague, with copies in the AG-T. The most important are the files of the Special People’s Court in Jičín 1945–1946 (criminal trials against the former wardresses). Finally, there is the firm’s archive at Texlen Trutnov; in the 1970s, its former head, Vladimír Wolf, made accessible to Miroslav Kryl and Ludmila Chládková the most important sources on the camps in the Trautenau (Trutnov) area contained in the files of the German textile firm for the years 1940 to 1945. Nevertheless, the sources are inadequate.

Miroslav Kryl
trans. Stephen Pallavicini

**Bersdorf-Friedeberg**

The Bersdorf-Friedeberg subcamp was established near Friedeberg (now Mírsk), located to the south of Greifenberg (now Gryfów Śląski) at the foot of the Izer Mountains (German: Isergebirge, Polish: Izerskie). The exact location is unknown.

There is a reference to the establishment of the Gross-Rosen subcamp in the account of former prisoner Greta Majzelsówna.

After the labor camp at Egelsdorf was closed down in May 1944, the prisoners living there—Jewish women who had been transported there from the transit camp at Sosnowitz—were moved to a “nearby concentration camp.” That was the forced labor camp (Zwangsarbeitslager, ZAL) Bersdorf-Friedeberg. The camp was situated on a hill. It consisted of wooden barracks painted green. On May 27, 1944—the day on which the group of Jewish women from Egelsdorf arrived there—it was already inhabited by 80 young Jewish women.

According to the account by witness Majzelsówna, a group of SS men from the Gross-Rosen concentration camp arrived at the camp in July 1944 before Bersdorf-Friedeberg was converted into a subcamp of Gross-Rosen. “One day in July, the Sturmbannführer and several other Germans from the Gross-Rosen headquarters are turning our labor camp into a concentration camp. They give us speeches and explain that now there will be justice and it will be better in every respect.” The female prisoners were allocated camp numbers, and 15 female SS guards (Aufseherinnen) in green uniforms were left to supervise the camp.

Living conditions were unsatisfactory. As in other camps, food was in short supply. To satisfy their hunger, prisoners gathered cabbage leaves and potatoes. They also ate cooked linseed, which they gathered in nearby factories—flax-crushing plants—where they worked.

From Majzelsówna’s scanty account, we cannot arrive at more detailed information. There are no references to life in it.
the camp or the plants where the prisoners worked. The evacuation of the Bersdorf-Friedeburg camp began in February 1945. After two days of arduous marching in the cold and without food, the prisoners reached Gross-Rosen Kratzau (present-day Chrastava in the Czech Republic) subcamp.


The AZIH’s account collection also contains material on this camp.

Magdalena Zając

trans. Gerard Majka

**NOTES**

1. AZIH, Account No. 538 of Greta Majzelsówna.
2. Ibid.

**BIESNITZER GRUND [AKA GÖRLITZ]**

Biesnitz, a village to the southwest of Görlitz that was incorporated into the city of Görlitz in 1951, was the location of a Jewish forced labor camp that was under the control of the Organisation Schmelt from May 1943 to January 1944. The inmates worked in the Waggonbau- und Maschinenfabrik AG Görlitz (WUMAG) until they were transported away in early 1944. Jews were held in the Biesnitzer Grund camp again starting in August 1944 when it served as a subcamp of Gross-Rosen. In the same month, 250 Jewish prisoners arrived in Biesnitz; 225 came from Auschwitz (Jews from Hungary, Slovakia, and Rothenia), and the remaining 25 arrived straight from Gross-Rosen. From Fünfteichen, also a Gross-Rosen subcamp, 403 Jews were sent to Biesnitz at the end of August 1944 after having been shunted off as less productive. On September 5, 1944, between 500 and 800 Jews arrived at the Biesnitz camp from the dissolved Litzmannstadt (Łódź) ghetto, among them 300 Hungarian and Slovakian women housed in quarters separate from the male prisoners. Finally, at the end of March 1945, between 120 and 180 women from the Gross-Rosen Ludwigsdorf subcamp arrived at the Biesnitzer Grund camp. The total number of inmates seems to have ranged between 900 and later 1,200 male and female prisoners of Jewish origin; a report dated December 5, 1944, mentions 1,406 inmates (1,106 males and 300 females). Karl-Heinz Gräfe and Hans-Jürgen Töpfer estimate a figure as high as 1,570 to 1,630 Jewish prisoners, of whom one-third were women.

The Nazis had a wooden fence built around the Biesnitzer Grund subcamp. Wire capable of conducting electricity was tensioned between the long posts, and a so-called trip wire was crisscrossed between the shorter posts. The barbed wire was electrified. There were probably 11 barracks in the male camp, of which 9 functioned as accommodation barracks. In the other 2 barracks, there was a kitchen, washroom, infirmary, and supply store. In the nearby female camp, there were only 2 or 3 barracks. In the Biesnitzer Grund camp, there was a disused brick mill with a machinery room and installations such as kilns and drying facilities for the raw bricks. Barracks for the guards and camp commander, Wehrmacht officer Erich Rechenberg (born 1901), were located outside the fenced-in camp. Rechenberg’s apartment was furnished with modern furniture. SS-Oberscharführer Joachim Zunker, born in 1917, served as camp leader (Lagerführer), and the camp elder (Lagersältester) was Hermann Czech, a criminal previously held in a Görlitz prison. After World War II, Zunker and Czech were sentenced to death by a Polish court. The Polish prisoner dentist Dr. Jaakov Kinrus recalls a few Jews from Greece as well as the later chairman of the Jewish community in Cologne, Kessler, as being in the Biesnitzer Grund camp. The Oberlagerführer, as he was called by the prisoners, always carried a leather whip when inspecting the camp, which he used for the slightest infraction of the rules. Arthur Berndt told about a Kapo who beat the prisoners when the loads they had to carry were too heavy for them.

There were different labor detachments with different tasks. Some of the prisoners slaved in the wagon construction area of the WUMAG, which now constructed mostly armored vehicles. Others were exploited in the machine construction area of Factory C where grenades were built. Constant work with heavy iron materials, the building blocks for the grenades, was a torture for the prisoners. It was even more difficult for those who worked at the ovens or the nearby metal presses. Only the Germans were permitted to wear masks when the tanks were sprayed with acetone for camouflage. Jaakov Kinrus, who worked in the munitions factory, was witness to intentional acts of sabotage by the prisoners. The prisoners worked 12 hours a day. In addition, there were roll calls in the camps. After hours there were constant controls to check whether the prisoners returned to the camp with fruit, bread, or food found in the garbage. The punishment for being caught was 5 to 10 blows with a whip. There were also more gruesome punishments.
The inadequate food was poorly prepared. Even the midday meal consisted of only cabbage and horse meat. Many of these unfortunate prisoners had problems with their feet; while marching they had to be supported by others or pulled on carts. The Görlitz medical doctor, Dr. Hans-Joachim Kautschke, regarded as a half-Jew, was shocked at the sight of the hungry prisoners, dressed in rags, from the Biesnitzer Grund subcamp. Women from Görlitz who were caught giving the prisoners food had to answer to the Nazis. Together with Jewish doctors from Hungary and Dr. Jakobson from Łódź, Dr. Jakov Kinrus worked in the camp's small hospital. They could not prevent deaths from the heavy labor, the constant lack of food, and the inhuman camp conditions. According to evidence from a trial, a city firm collected, between 1943 and February 1945, 20 to 25 corpses a week. From the statistics, one can conclude that between April 1944 and February 1945, 148 Jews were cremated; 100 of the names suggest Polish citizens, a few Soviets, and the rest German Jews. From February 1945, the concentration camp dead were hastily buried in mass graves not far from the Jewish cemetery. The high weekly count of corpses also probably has something to do with the secret execution of Soviet prisoners of war (POWs) and Polish prisoners, which took place at Biesnitzer Grund.

The Biesnitzer Grund subcamp, together with the Görlitz population, was forcibly evacuated on February 18, 1945, in the face of the advance of the Soviet Army from the northeast. An inhuman march, interrupted by shootings, led through the villages of Kunnerwitz, Friedersdorf, Sohland, and Albersdorf to Rennersdorf. Later the bodies of 10 to 12 prisoners were discovered who had most likely been shot because they could no longer walk. In the abandoned Kunnerwitz manor, 13 murder victims were found in the cess pit. At the edge of the forest near Sohland, it is thought that 20 prisoners were shot because they took beets for fodder from a haystack; 11 of the camp inmates are buried in the Rennersdorf cemetery. A number of witness statements refer to other deaths during the evacuation march. However, as Nazi Party (NSDAP) District Leader Bruno Malitz needed the prisoners for fortification works and tank barriers, he ordered that they march back. After three weeks, the concentration camp prisoners who survived the barbaric march arrived back in Görlitz, where they were finally liberated by the Soviet Army on May 8, 1945. In February 1948, 173 corpses were discovered in two of the mass graves opened in the Jewish cemetery, the victims of the inhuman prison conditions and violence between the middle of February 1945 and May 8, 1945.

Between April 6 and April 22, 1948, two of the main culprits were tried before a German regional court (Landgericht) at Bautzen in the Görlitz city hall. The two accused were the last Nazi mayor (Oberbürgermeister), Dr. Hans Meinshausen, and Dr. Bruno Malitz. According to the local press that closely followed the trial, they were "the first Nazi prisoners of this category who were tried in the Soviet Occupation Zone, after they had disappeared in the Western Zone, where they were caught." Although both denied what they thought they could deny, they received death sentences, which were justified by their criminal policies.

**SOURCES**


The RAG holds press clippings on the Malitz–Meinshausen trial; state prosecutor Rolf Helm who brought the charges wrote the following articles: “Das Urteil von Görlitz,” *Wh*, May 11, 1948; and “Mit Schweiss und Blut gedüngter Boden im Biesnitzer Grund,” *SächsZ*, July 8, 1955. Only one RAG file deals directly with charges against Bruno Malitz and Hans Meinshausen in 1948. Three reports from Jewish citizens from Poland about their deportation to Germany (including the Biesnitzer Grund camp) are held in YVA in Jerusalem; Arthur Berndt mentions the camp in his memoirs on his forced labor at the WUMAG between 1943 and 1945.

Roland Otto

*trans. Stephen Pallavicini*

**BIRNBÄUMELE**

Birnbäumele, a subcamp of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp, operated from 1944 to 1945 in Birnbäumele (present-day Gruszeczka near Milicz, Lower Silesia Province). The camp was situated near the road from Sulau (Sułów) to Birnbäumele, in a spot totally surrounded by woods. It was one of many camps in the region and one of four operating in the Gross-Rosen concentration camp system created in connection with the “Barthold Operation,” that is, the defense of Lower Silesia Province against the oncoming offensive of Soviet forces.

The first and probably last prisoner transport arrived at Birnbäumele from the Auschwitz concentration camp on October 22, 1944. The group comprised 1,000 women, all Jewish, with numbers from 78501 to 79500.
No data is available on the death rate among prisoners. At least one execution occurred: Irene Scheer, prisoner number 78787, born on June 3, 1900, was sentenced to death by hanging for trying to escape from the camp. The sentence was carried out on November 17, 1944, at 3:45 P.M. Fellow prisoners Hilda Tanzer (number 78784) and Sidonia Hirsch (number 78645) were to participate in the execution. Reported in camp records, the event was not noted in the only known account of a former prisoner. In her opinion, there were no murders in the camp.

The camp was ruled by SS men unknown by name, aided by Wehrmacht soldiers who supervised the prisoners during work. The Birnbaumel subcamp prisoners worked at various earthmoving jobs associated with building trenches. Unternehmen Barthold, a company whose operations staff was located in the village of Kraschnitz (Krosznice), 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) from the village of Hochweiler (Wierchowice), was formed for the supervision and coordination of projects conducted in the region.

The camp was probably evacuated on January 23, 1945. The prisoners were led on foot to the Gross-Rosen main camp and then transported to Bergen-Belsen in freight cars. A group of about 20 prisoners escaped from the evacuation column as the march began and were liberated in Birnbaumel.

**SOURCES**

This work is based primarily on the monographs by Bogdan Cybulski, *Obozy podporządkowane KL Gross-Rosen: stań badań* (Rogoznica: Państwowe Muzeum Gross-Rosen, 1987); and Isabell Sprenger, *Gross-Rosen: Ein Konzentrationslager in Schlesien* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1994); as well as the article by Alfred Koniecny, “Kobiety w obozie koncentracyjnym Gross-Rosen,” *Sie 9* (1982). Additional sources used were witness interrogations as well as reports from the investigation conducted on the camps and on crimes committed in 1944–1945 in the towns of Szeiczko and Bukolewo. This material, which was acquired from the Okręgowa Komisja Badań Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce (Regional Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland), is located in the AMGR, catalog No. DP/6500.

Grażyna Choptiany
trans. Gerard Majka

**BOLKENHAHN**

The Gross-Rosen subcamp at Bolkenhain (later Bolków) most probably came into being in August 1944. The camp was located on the outskirts of Wolmsdorf (Wolbromek), on a small hill now called Góra Ryszarda. The prisoner camp was made up of five barracks: three living barracks, an infirmary (Rezerv) and sewing and shoemaking shops in the fourth, and a bathhouse and bathrooms in the fifth barrack made of brick. There were several rooms in each living barrack; each room housed several dozen people. The camp headquarters, kitchen, and guardhouse were located outside the camp fence.

The exact number of prisoners in the camp is not known. According to the account of former prisoner Leopold Sokołowski, the camp population on any given day was approximately 600 prisoners, and a total of over 800 people passed through the camp during its existence (between August 1944 and February 1945).¹

The prisoners were exclusively male. Almost all of them were Jewish. They mainly came from Hungary and Poland; several dozen of them were Greek nationals. Only a few functionary prisoners were Polish and German.

Two prisoner transports sent to the Bolkenhain camp are known. They both came from the main camp at Gross-Rosen. The first arrived in late August 1944 and numbered over 600 people. The definite majority, approximately 400, were Hungarian Jews. But there were also in this transport approximately 200 Polish Jews who had previously been transported to Gross-Rosen from the Krakau-Plaszow concentration camp and several dozen Greek Jews.

The other known transport arrived at Bolkenhain in early 1945. It included approximately 200 Jewish prisoners who had previously been evacuated from the Auschwitz concentration camp.²

The living conditions in the camp were quite hard. There was only cold water in the bathhouse, and “bathing” took place once a week. At that time, the Kapos would pour warm water into several brick troughs about 1.5 × 0.4 × 0.5 meters (1.64 × .44 × .55 yards), into which they placed four prisoners at a time. Prodded on by the Kapos, the prisoners had to wash quickly. Due to the crowding and amount of time they had, it was impossible to wash appropriately, so the prisoners only came out of those “baths” a little wet. The camp was very heavily infested with lice, and the prisoners had to eliminate lice on their own. Every day the barrack chiefs had to send the camp elder (Lagerältester) glasses full of the caught lice. The prisoners treated the duty of catching lice every day as persecution. Since that method of delousing the camp did not provide the anticipated effects, a “lice infestation inspection” was ordered. The inspection took place when the prisoners came back from work on the day shift. The prisoners stood on the assembly ground the whole night waiting to be admitted to the hospital, where the doctors counted the lice on each prisoner, and the camp scribe made a list. This operation ended in the only disinfection in the camp’s entire existence. Unfortunately, it did not improve the situation.

Some Bolkenhain prisoners attempted to escape from the camp; unfortunately, no information exists on whether any of the attempts were successful. However, information has survived of the executions of three prisoners caught after failed escape attempts: Aron Farkas, a Hungarian Jew, born on July 23, 1898, in Tinaboken, was hung on September 28, 1944.³ Samuel Janowitz, also a Hungarian Jew, born on March 14, 1926, in Muszt, was hung on October 13, 1944. Fellow prisoners Marton Friedman and Kalmar Grünspan were designated to carry out the execution.⁴ Henryk Laufner, a Polish Jew, was hung on November 30, 1944. Fellow prisoners Jakub Glücksmann and Benjamin Weimann carried out the execution.⁵

Leopold Sokołowski also described the Lagerführer shooting a prisoner who had stolen handfuls of raw carrots from
the camp kitchen. The tragedy took place during a roll call. First the Lagerführer made a cynical speech about friendship, saying that stealing the carrots was not friendly behavior and deserved only the death penalty in wartime circumstances. He forced the prisoners standing in the roll call to repeat those words, and one of them, beaten by the Lagerführer, had to “deliver” the death penalty. Then the Lagerführer ordered his victim to “go onto the barbed wire.” The prisoner got as far as the guard posts and stopped; the Lagerführer then shot him.6

According to Sokolowski, the camp death rate was 20 to 25 percent of the inmate population. The naked corpses of prisoners, who had chiefly died of hunger, emaciation, and beating, were kept in a specially prepared, concrete-lined rectangular pit located next to the camp entrance gate. From there they were carted away to the main camp at Gross-Rosen every few days.

Leo Hersch stated that by the time the aforementioned 200-person transport came to Bolkenhain in January 1945, there were only about 300 prisoners living in camp.

The number of SS staff is unknown. SS-Unterscharführer Friedrich Karl Wolff, born March 2, 1904, in Schweidnitz, held the post of Lagerführer. He died in April 1945 in unknown circumstances. The only German prisoner in the camp, Hans Henschel, held the post of Lagerältester.

The prisoners worked at Vereinigte Deutsche Metallwerke, making aircraft parts. They operated metalworking machines, mainly lathes, drills, milling machines, and grinders. The parts they made were then assembled in the other production halls, where the prisoners did not work. Prior to the Bolkenhain prisoners, French prisoners of war had operated the machines. They also trained their replacements. The prisoners punched time cards in the production hall to document their work time.

A small group of prisoners made up what was called the Aussenkommando, which worked building roads or streets. Due to the ever more frequent standstills in the factory, in the final weeks of the camp’s existence, some prisoners were put to work cutting down trees in the vicinity of Bolkenhain.

The Bolkenhain camp existed until approximately mid-February 1945. Two days before the camp was abandoned, the sick prisoners were probably murdered with poison injections. Their number ranges between 627 and 150 to 200 people.8 The bodies of the murdered people were buried in a mass grave prepared earlier.

The evacuation began around February 15 and included approximately 500 people. The prisoners were prodded along on foot via snow-covered side roads toward the city of Hirschberg (later Jelenia Góra). During the march, the Lagerführer, aided by the Lagerältester, selected several dozen weak prisoners, who were shot by the SS men escorting them.9 After two days of marching, the prisoners reached the Hirschberg camp. There they stopped for several days.

The Bolkenhain prisoners continued their journey along with the Hirschberg prisoners. The column, now numbering approximately 1,000 people, was prodded on toward the town of Reichenau (later Rychnov in the Czech Republic), which they reached in the final days of February. The prisoners were loaded onto open freight cars at the Reichenau train station and transported to the Buchenwald concentration camp. The prisoners were not given any food during the trip from Reichenau to Buchenwald, which lasted about five days. Sokolowski recalled that, under those circumstances, the trip claimed numerous lives.

On March 7, 1945, 905 men from the transport were admitted to the Buchenwald concentration camp. They were mainly Jewish prisoners from the Hirschberg and Bolkenhain camps, as well as a dozen or so non-Jewish prisoners who joined the transport at Reichenau station and were from the Reichenau camp. It has not been determined how many of these prisoners had come from the evacuation at the Bolkenhain camp.

SOURCES The following publications contain information on the Bolkenhain subcamp: Bogdan Cybulski, “żydzi w fi-

liach obozu koncentracyjnego Gross-Rosen,” SFiZH 2 (1975); Alfred Konieczny, “Egzekucje w obozie koncentracyjnym Gross-Rosen,” Studia nad fascyzmem i zbrodniami biterow- wszkimi 4 (1979); and Konieczny, “Nowe dokumenty o egzeku-

cjach w obozie koncentracyjnym Gross-Rosen,” AUW, no. 642 (1982). Certain information concerning this subcamp can also be found in Bogdan Cybulski, Obyz podporządkowane Gross-Rosen (Rogożnica, 1987).

Archive materials concerning the Bolkenhain subcamp are mainly former prisoners’ accounts and memoirs. They can be found in the following archives: AMGR, AZIH, and AK-IPN in Warsaw. Documents concerning executions conducted (e.g., in Bad Warmbrunn) can be found in the archives of the ITS in Arolsen.

Danuta Sawicka
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES

1. AMGR, 5758/642/DP—Account of Leopold Sokolowski; and 8751/6/DP—Correspondence of L. Sokolowski with the Gross-Rosen Concentration Camp Former Prisoners Club of Warsaw, dated August 8, 1960, and August 18, 1960.
2. AZIH, Account No. 721 filed by Leo Hersch.
3. ITS, Gross-Rosen Concentration Camp Collection, 52: 73–74.
4. Ibid., 52: 99–100.
5. AK-IPN, Microfilm Collection, M-623, Frames 22–23.
6. AMGR, 5758/642/DP—Account of Leopold Sokolowski.
7. AZIH, Account No. 5488, filed by Henryk Fuchsmann, July 23, 1945.
8. AMGR, 6500/9-d/DP—Poznań District Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes to the Wrocław District Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes, letter, dated February 17, 1973. Contains information from materials collected by the Public Prosecutor’s Office at the National Court in Braunschweig, which conducted the investigation in the matter of the crimes committed at the Bolkenhain camp.
9. Ibid.
BRESLAU-HUNDSFELD

The Breslau-Hundsfeld subcamp of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp, located in what is now Wrocław's Psie Pole section, was probably formed in July 1944 to meet the needs of the Rheinmetall-Borsig corporation, which produced bomb fuses and anti-aircraft gun sights. From the reports of the Wrocław Armaments Command's war diary (Kriegstagebuch des Rüstungskommandos Breslau), it is known that on June 18, 1944, there were meetings at the Rheinmetall-Borsig company about building the camp quickly. However, operations to use Gross-Rosen concentration camp prisoners for Rheinmetall-Borsig were being undertaken by the aviation section of the Breslau Arms Inspection Agency considerably earlier, in the first quarter of 1943.

At all the women's subcamps of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp, including Breslau-Hundsfeld, all the arriving prisoners were Jewish, mainly from Poland and Hungary. This is confirmed by the testimony of Elfriede Stephan (who served as a guard in the camp starting October 1, 1944) that only Jewish women lived at Breslau-Hundsfeld.1

The first group of prisoners was probably put in the newly formed camp in October 1944. They came from the Auschwitz II-Birkenau concentration camp (perhaps because of that camp's planned evacuation). The number of prisoners who came and went through the camp is not known; they probably received numbers ranging from 49501 to 54000.

There is no information on working and living conditions in the camp. All that is known is that the diet was very poor. The women were conveyed from the camp to the factory by female guards who also watched them during work. They worked 12 hours a day.

Gross-Rosen concentration camp headquarters records for December 30, 1944, list as camp leader (Lagerführer) for the Breslau-Hundsfeld subcamp the name of Emma Kowa, born October 31, 1915, in Pforzheim. Besides the aforementioned Elfriede Stephan, the following guards' names are also known: Gerda Glowacki and Emilia Welzbach, as well as SS-Schützen Lenz, Loy, and Lukossek. On May 27, 1947, Stephan was sentenced to three years of incarceration by the S´widnica District Court. It is also known that the Mannheim District Attorney's investigation against Welzbach was discontinued in 1972 due to the statute of limitations pertaining to the acts with which she was charged.

The camp was probably evacuated on January 25, 1945. The prisoners were first sent to the main camp. Their further fate is unknown.

SOURCES This is not a well-documented Gross-Rosen subcamp; as a result, fundamental published works generally regarding Gross-Rosen subcamps were used. These include Bogdan Cybulski, Obozy podporządkowane KL Gross-Rosen (Rogóźnica, 1987); Alfred Konieczny, “Uwagi o planach wykorzystania więźniów KL Gross-Rosen w przemyśle zbrojeniowym Trzeciej Rzeszy,” SFiZH 23 (2000); Konieczny, “Kobiety w obozie koncentracyjnym Gross-Rosen w latach 1944–1945,” Sím, 40 (1982); and Konieczny, “Ewakuacja obozu koncentracyjnego Gross-Rosen w 1945 roku,” SFiZH 2:281 (1975).

ITS, Verzeichnis der Haftstätten unter dem Reichsführer-SS (1933–1945), 2 vols. (Arolsen, 1979), was also used in determining the camp's dates of operation and the data regarding employment of female prisoners. Some data found in Mieczysław Moldawy's monograph on the Gross-Rosen camp, Gross-Rosen: Oboz koncentracyjny na Śląsku (Wrocław, 1990), were also taken into account.

Also used were documents at AMGR (AMGR, sygn. 7613/DP), in which the female official of the Breslau-Hundsfeld camp is mentioned. Information regarding the staff of this camp also originates from investigative and court reports kept at AK-IPN in Warsaw (AMGR, sygn. 47/39/MF). Helpful are also notes of a former prisoner, Roman Olzyn, located in the materials acquired by him pertaining to the history of subcamps (AMGR, sygn. 8751/DP).

NOTE 1. AMGR, sygn. 47/39/MF, material of the AK-IPN at Warsaw.

BRESLAU-LISSA

The Breslau-Lissa (now Wrocław-Leśnica) subcamp came into being in mid-August 1942. The first prisoner transport probably arrived there on August 18, 1942. This was, therefore, the first subcamp of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp.

The camp was formed to support an SS military facilities complex: barracks, a large firing ground, and an ammunition depot. The prisoners were put to work expanding the facilities and those within a kilometer of the camp. They also worked for the Paul Urbansky company, building roads, and unloading cargo at the nearby railroad station, especially beginning in autumn 1944. It was at that time that building materials and various equipment started being brought in from Auschwitz to the camp warehouses.

The first prisoners were accommodated in a large wooden barracks with a brick floor and fenced halfway around where earlier there had been an army horse stable. Along the barracks ran bunks on which the prisoners slept side by side on straw (later two-tiered bunks were set up). The horse basins were converted into washrooms, and a dining hall was made out of several makeshift tables and large benches. An infirmary (Reiter) with bunks for 12 patients was set aside in a corner of the stable.

One more barracks for prisoners was built at a later time. The storeroom and kitchen were located separately in a small barracks, as well as a small infirmary where only emergency aid was provided. There was also a small assembly ground. The small camp was fenced with barbed wire with watchtowers in the corners. Outside the camp there was what was called a guardhouse, and right at the gate was a building housing the camp command post and commander's quarters.
The initial transport numbered 150 prisoners. In all likelihood, only 17 prisoners from that transport survived until March 1943. Another 150 prisoners were sent later.

The initial period of the camp's operation was very difficult for the inmates. Living conditions were extremely hard; the prisoners were nagged by hunger and incessant repressive measures by the staff and the German prisoner-functionaries. There were many escape attempts, which resulted in even more repressive measures, as well as many suicides. The records of the Wrocław Executive Committee (Nadprezydium) contain a report on the escape of a Russian prisoner Wassili Woronow (Polish spelling), prisoner number 6577, from the Breslau-Lissa camp on July 18, 1943. Apprehended fugitives were sent back to the main camp, but in general prisoners were killed if caught.

The death rate was very high at that time. Bodies were taken to the main camp, and the subcamp's prisoner population was replenished on that basis.

In the camp's next state of existence, the main causes of death were bloody diarrhea, general emaciation of the body, or accidents at the construction site.

In the first quarter of 1943, the prisoner population was probably over 200. The number of prisoners increased over time. On October 24, 1944, at least 174 expert tradesmen prisoners from the evacuated Bauleitung Kommando arrived straight from Auschwitz. The prisoner population was probably over 500 by late 1944.

Russians and Germans were initially in the greatest numbers among prisoners; later Poles predominated. Ukrainians and Czechs were also an appreciable group.

Prisoners were dressed in striped prisoners clothing and had a strip of hair shaved down the middle of their heads.

Later on, living conditions improved considerably and were better than at the main camp or at Auschwitz. What bothered the prisoners the most were the hunger and cold, particularly in late 1944, when few packages were arriving, and the portions of food were decreasing. However, it was sometimes possible to get the remnants of barracks food from Wehrmacht soldiers. The Germans, despite the SS's official ban on prisoners being in the guards' barrack buildings, were glad to let them in and used them for various work. Thanks to this, the prisoners working as glaziers, carpenters, coal carriers, and cleaners had the opportunity of getting warm in heated quarters. Former prisoner Witold Wiśniewski also remembers that they used to make colored plywood animals at the camp carpentry shop and smuggle them into the barracks to exchange them for bread and cigarettes. The prisoners also made custom portraits or Christmas cards with gothic lettering.

The regimen at camp as well as at work had slackened appreciably by late 1944. At Christmastime, the prisoners were even allowed to set up a tree in the guards' barrack dining area and sing carols out loud. In this later stage, there were no acts of terror, for example, brutal beatings or killings of prisoners. The prisoner death rate was also low at that time. Probably only two prisoners died in the final month before evacuation. No incidents of execution of this camp's prisoners are recorded.

The tolerable living conditions at camp were also possible because camp commander SS-Unterscharführer Erich Fischer was favorably inclined toward the prisoners that supported the efforts of the prisoner-functionaries. Even the commander's wife helped the prisoners; she and the prisoner-functionaries arranged to get fox meat from a nearby breeding farm. SS men kept watch over the prisoners at work. The prisoners worked 10 hours; they only worked longer when unloading railroad cars.

There is no information about sabotage on the job. The prisoners communicated with civilian workers, among whom were numerous Poles. Letters were sent via them. The camp doctor, who was permitted to move about the entire construction site, established such close relations with the civilian workers that he was finally moved to Auschwitz concentration camp. SS-Unterscharführer Alfred Barth was the first camp leader (Lagerführer), followed by Erich Fischer.

The evacuation on foot to the Gross-Rosen main camp began on January 23, 1945. The march lasted three days. The evacuation column stopped at barns to put up for the night. There were even instances of prisoners receiving some modest food from a local farmer. There were no acts of repression. At the end of the column, the prisoners pulled sleds with provisions and the camp staff's belongings. Thanks to the efforts of the barric chief and doctor as well as the commander's wife, who ordered the sick and weak to be put in sleds, the Breslau-Lissa prisoners reached their destination in the best condition of all the Breslau area subcamps. They were also sent to a section of Gross-Rosen called the "Auschwitz camp," from where they continued on to Buchenwald concentration camp in February 1945.


ITS, *Verzeichnis der Haftstätten unter dem Reichsführer-SS* (1933–1945), 2 vols. (Arolsen, 1979), was also used in determining the camp's dates of operation and the data regarding employment of prisoners, as was Mieczysław Moldawa's monograph on the Gross-Rosen camp, *Gross-Rosen: Obóz koncentracyjny na Śląsku* (Wrocław, 1990).

The Breslau-Lissa camp has a substantially extensive literature of memoirs, which is a rich source of information and accounts of daily camp life. The following works were consulted and used: Andrzej Batat and Wacław Dominik, *As stali się probem i rozpaçzą* (Wrocław: wydawn. Krajowa Agencja Wydawnictw, 1980) (the work focuses on life in Fünfteichen camp; it also contains information on the evacuation from the Breslau-Lissa camp); Józef Jabłoński, "Z Radogoszcza do Oświęcimia, Gross-Rosen i Mauthausen," *PL*, Nr. 1 (1969); Józef Zeglen, "Z 'rewiru' w Gross-Rosen," *PL*, Nr. 1 (1969).

wydawn. Książka i Wiedza, 1981) contains detailed descriptions regarding numerous aspects of camp life and is very valuable on specific characteristics of the camp.

The fundamental research materials (accounts, memoirs, autobiographies, correspondence) held at AMGR allowed for the verification of numerous data. Determinations concerning camp officers were verified mainly on the basis of AMGR, sygn. 7834/DP (card index of members of KL Gross-Rosen personnel). Also consulted were AMGR, sygn. 5758/DP (materials from the Club of Former Prisoners of Gross-Rosen in Warsaw); and AMGR, sygn. 8751/DP (materials acquired by a former prisoner of Gross-Rosen, Roman Olszyn).

Another rich source of information are the records of the AK-IPN and AK-IPN WR (copies of interrogations, sentences).

Anna Golembiacka
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTE


BRESLAU I

Few German records about the operation of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp subcamps in Breslau (Polish: Wrocław) have survived. The information below is based on available studies and on the accounts of witnesses—former prisoners of those camps. Some of the information concerns both Breslau I and Breslau II.

Wrocław’s Gross-Rosen subcamps were formed in consequence of an operation to put Gross-Rosen concentration camp prisoners to work in the Third Reich’s arms industry (Breslau I, Breslau II, Breslau-Hundsfeld) and serving the army (Breslau-Lissa).

No exact date can be established for when the Breslau I subsidiary was formed; mid-1944 is most likely. The Breslau weaponry command’s war log (Kriegstagebuch des Rüstungskommandos Breslau) for the second quarter of 1944 only refers to talks held on June 18, 1944, at the Fahrzeug- und Motorenwerke (Famo-Werke) plant on the construction of the camp, during which the participants stressed that it had to be done soon.

The accounts of former prisoners primarily concern the initial transports to the camp, which had already been set up. Some prisoners recall being transferred from the Breslau II camp to the camp at the Famo-Werke plant in the summer of 1944. They replaced the “civilians” who had lived in the barracks previously, and they worked getting the new camp set up. Some prisoners remained at the camp afterward, and some returned to the Linke Hofmann Werke plant. A prisoner who came to Breslau II from the main camp in the first transport of approximately 60 people, probably in late August 1944, relates that they were also joined by a group of about 60 prisoners assigned to Famo-Werke.

The population of both Breslau I and Breslau II increased only in the autumn of 1944, due to the influx of prisoners to the Gross-Rosen concentration camp after the Warsaw Uprising. They were questioned at the main camp for their occupational suitability and then sent to various subcamps, such as Breslau I (a transport of around 300 prisoners arrived here probably on October 12, 1944).

Breslau I prisoner population figures vary. Studies provide a figure of approximately 2,000 prisoners. Depending on when they were incarcerated in the camp, former prisoners describe the inmate population at from 500 to 2,000. The camp mainly held Poles, as well as Czechs and Russians; there were fewer Yugoslavs, French, Dutch, Belgians, and Germans. The latter initially assumed most of the positions in the camp’s prisoner administration.

The camp consisted of wooden barracks (probably 10 in total) with a separate kitchen. The camp was fenced with electrified barbed wire with guard towers set at intervals.

The prisoners were dressed in work overalls with painted phosphorescent bands on the sleeves and a cross on the back, as well as stripes on the pants, to prevent escapes.

Living conditions were difficult. Prisoners slept on bunk beds, two in a bunk. Although some point out that the discipline here was not as harsh as at the main camp, hunger was rife, yet the prisoners had to work hard.

The camp had been organized because of the demand for labor at Famo-Werke, which manufactured aircraft engines and tank parts (most probably caterpillar treads for artillery tractors).

The camp was situated near the factory. SS men guarded the prisoners on their walk to work for their 12-hour shifts. They also checked the number of prisoners at work (roll calls in the factory were mandatory after a prisoner had escaped). German civilian workers supervised the work at the factory. The accounts only mention an Austrian foreman who was not as rigorous as the others and even helped prisoners.

The forced laborers working in the factory tried to provide help, exemplified by the prisoners’ letters to families that they sent. Food packages came to the camp more often because of this.

There are no known instances of sabotage. But there were escapes from the factory, such as when two prisoners left the factory premises in a delivery truck and another prisoner who left unnoticed after work with a group of forced laborers.

There are no figures on the number of dead prisoners of this subcamp. Some point out that there were no particular instances of prisoner abuse in the Breslau I subcamp. A former prisoner who held the position of doctor claims that no murders occurred there, and working conditions were considerably better than those at Linke Hofmann Werke, for instance. The prisoner death rate was rather due to pneumonia and diarrhea. Bodies were carted away from the camp.

We only know of one instance of execution, that of a Breslau I prisoner, carried out at the main camp on December 2, 1944. That was the hanging of Russian Nikolaj Szwalke (Schwalke), prisoner number 69988, for attempting to escape from camp on October 26, 1944.
The infirmary was located in a separate small barrack where two doctors and the medical personnel lived. It was very poorly equipped with medical supplies. Sick prisoners of the neighboring Breslau II subsidiary were also admitted here. The decision to admit patients was always up to the SS man supervising the infirmary. Seriously ill people were sent to the main camp (for example, a patient ill with what was called bloody diarrhea was sent back to the subcamp in about a month). There were also instances when prisoners who had been seriously injured at work were taken to Breslau city hospitals. A prisoner injured in an explosion in late 1944 survived to be liberated in a city hospital.

The population was systematically replenished. More prisoners were sent from the main camp as late as early January 1945.

SS-Unterscharführer Körner was camp leader (Lagerführer). His attitude toward prisoners is reported to have been proper. The names of eight rank-and-file members of the Breslau subcamp’s staff are also known, chiefly from the surviving equipment receipt book (Gerätebuch) II log (which subcamp is unspecified), namely: Ries, Redlich, Seiberling, Barner, Gosso, Stefan Körmöczi, Hark, and Andreas Patachitsch. It is known that the last person mentioned was sentenced to four years’ imprisonment by decree of the Kraków District Court on March 25, 1948.

The camp was probably evacuated on January 23, 1945, at the same time as the other Breslau subcamps (probably excepting Breslau-Hundsfeld). All the prisoners, including sick ones, were sent to Gross-Rosen on foot, under escort by the camp guards. The march lasted several days (the column wove its way through back roads) in the bitter winter cold. The prisoners were forced to pull wagons with the field kitchens, provisions, and the sick, as well as the SS men’s belongings. The second night in the barn of a farm was one to remember, as some of the prisoners hid; the Germans found most of them the next morning and shot them.

After reaching the main camp, the prisoners were sent to the unfinished barracks of a section of Gross-Rosen called the “Auschwitz camp,” where under terrible conditions, without food or any way to keep warm, they awaited further evacuation to various concentration camps.

**NOTES**

2. AMGR, catalog No. 5913/10/DP, 2935/DP.
3. AMGR, catalog No. 6651/DP, 2479.

**SOURCES** Information on this camp may be found in the following publications:

- The catalog of camps, published by the ITS, *Verzeichnis der Haftstaten unter dem Reichsführer-SS* (1933–1945), 2 vols. (Arolsen, 1979), was also used in determining the camp’s dates of operation and the data regarding employment of prisoners.
- Some data found in Mieczysław Moldała’s monograph on the Gross-Rosen camp, *Gross-Rosen: Oboz koncentracyjny na Śląsku* (Wrocław: Wydawn. Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1990), was also taken into account. Helpful in describing transports to the Breslau I camp and subject matter regarding prisoner employment (often specialists) in the arms (war) industry was Barbara Sawicka’s publication *Z pozostającjej Warzyzny do KL Gross-Rosen* (Walbrzych: Wydawn. Państwowe Muzeum Gross-Rosen, 1994).

Among archival sources, the holdings of AMGR stand out: Determinations concerning camp officers were verified mainly on the basis of the Card Index of members of KL Gross-Rosen personnel (AMGR, sygn. 7834/DP). A rich and in practice fundamental source of information proved to be *Materiały Klubu byłych Więźniów Gross-Rosen* (Materials from the Club of Former Prisoners of Gross-Rosen) in Warsaw (AMGR, sygn. 5758/DP), as well as materials acquired by a former prisoner of Gross-Rosen, Roman Olszyn (AMGR, sygn. 8751/DP). These materials contain accounts, memoirs, autobiographies, and correspondence of former inmates. Also valuable and important sources of information are records of the AK-IPN WR and AK-IPN, with copies of official records (minutes of interrogations, sentences/judgments) and interviews with former prisoners of Gross-Rosen (Group A—sets of questions in acquiring accounts of former prisoners of KL Gross-Rosen).

Anna Golombiecka

**VOLUME I: PART A**

**BRESLAU II**

While no exact date for the opening of the Breslau II subcamp of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp has been established, research findings point to mid-1944. Accounts by former prisoners show that the first small group (of approximately 60 to 100 prisoners) was sent to Breslau II from the main camp in late August 1944.1 The prisoners were put in a building at the Linke Hofmann Werke company over Production Hall No. 7 in the factory office space, where they replaced Russian prisoners of war (POWs). They were put to work building barbed-wire fences (the hall was not yet fenced; guards stood at the entrances) and leveling the site for the assembly ground. Meals were brought in from the plant kitchen, and prisoners slept in the hall on straw mattresses (when the camp was completed, they slept on three-decker bunks). It took about four weeks to get the camp ready. Later on, besides the production hall and assembly ground, there was also a barrack built by the prisoners. An apartment barrack was also put up outside camp for camp officials.

The first major transport of approximately 300 prisoners arrived in late September or early October 1944 (prisoners from the Warsaw Uprising) and was composed of skilled
workers. Prisoner population figures for the subcamp vary, depending on the time they apply to, from approximately 400 to 2,000 prisoners. Günther Otto Treu, serving guard duty from autumn 1944 to early January 1945, testified that there were over 2,000 prisoners. They were of various nationalities: Poles, Ukrainians, Belgians, French, Czech, and even Chinese (approximately 13 Chinese, residents of Warsaw, were put into Gross-Rosen concentration camp in the initial postprising transport from the Pruszków transit camp in late September or early October 1944).

The prisoners lived and worked in the isolated production hall in the cold, with no ventilation, exposed to the constant inhalation of production fumes, mainly railway car paint and combustion gases. Health conditions were very poor. The prisoners were tormented by lice infestation. The starvation food rations (food was trucked in from outside the camp in pots), hard labor, and persecution by the staff (such as evening roll calls dragging on throughout the night) completed the picture of the especially hard conditions prevailing at this camp.

General emaciation of the body was also a reason for the high mortality rate. The deaths caused by paint poisoning even interested German doctors at one time. The dead were carted out of the camp, and the prisoner population was systematically replenished. An infirmary was set aside in the space for the prisoners, but only emergency aid was provided there. The seriously ill were sent to the main camp, and others were sent to the infirmary at Breslau I.

Breslau II prisoners worked for the Borsig-Werke and Linke Hofmann companies. They were put to work assembling railway cars and tanks. The work was supervised by German foremen, and their attitude toward prisoners can be described as proper. There were no other civilian workers in the production hall. On the other hand, the prisoner-functionaries and guards were known for their mistreatment of prisoners and frequent beatings of them at work (for example, they used to chase the prisoners through the narrow doors of the production hall).

Just as at Breslau I, prisoners wore work clothes with white markings and had a strip shaved down the middle of their heads.

There are no known instances of sabotage at work.

The camp leader (Lagerführer) was Sturmbannführer Bohnenstangel, whose attitude toward the prisoners was decidedly negative, and the roll-call leader (Rapportführer) was named Kampf. Only one other staff member, Günter Otto Treu, can be identified by name. He was sentenced to eight years in prison by the Świdnica District Court on April 26, 1945. There are no known instances of executions of camp prisoners.

For camp officers, see AMGR, sygn. 7834/DP; in the matter of prisoners sent on December 4, 1944, from Gross-Rosen to the Buchenwald concentration camp Langensalza subcamp, where prisoners caught escaping were sent (the transport arrived there the next day). Also, surviving Wroclaw Executive Committee records on fugitives who were caught include a report about Iwan Kunewitsch, a prisoner from the subcamp who escaped from Linke Hoffmann Werke on September 22, 1944.

Accounts of former prisoners also mention escapes, such as a successful one by two prisoners the night of January 2–3, 1945. There are no known instances of executions of camp prisoners.

The prisoners were evacuated on foot to the Gross-Rosen main camp, probably on January 23, 1945, and the evacuation lasted about a week. Former prisoners provide discrepant information on the evacuation dates and route. But they all recall the hard winter conditions during the march and the particular cruelty of the SS men guarding the Breslau II prisoner evacuation column. As was the case with Breslau I prisoners, they also pulled wagons with staff belongings. At first, the bodies of those who had been shot while escaping (especially during the first night’s stop, probably in Kostenblut) or during the march were buried; later they were left along the road.

When they reached the main camp, the surviving prisoners were sent to the “Auschwitz” section of the camp, where they awaited further evacuation under terrible conditions.

**SOURCES**

Information on this camp may be found in the following publications: Bogdan Cybulski, _Obawy podporządkowane KL Gross-Rosen_ (Rogoźnica, 1987); Alfred Konieczny, “Uwagi o planach wykorzystania więźniów KL Gross-Rosen w przemyśle zbrojeniowym Trzeciej Rzeszy,” _SFiZH_ 23 (2000); Konieczny, “Egzekucje w obozie koncentracyjnym Gross-Rosen,” _SFiZH_ 4 (1979); Konieczny, “Ewakuacja obozu koncentracyjnego Gross-Rosen w 1945 roku,” _SFiZH_ 2:281 (1975); Konieczny, _Chronologia transportów i numeracja więźniów w KL Gross-Rosen_ (Materiały wewnętrzne Państwowego Muzeum Gross-Rosen, n.d.).

The ITS, _Verzeichnis der Haftstätten unter dem Reichsführer-SS_ (1933–1945), 2 vols. (Arolsen, 1979), was also used in determining the camp’s dates of operation and the data regarding employment of prisoners. Some data found in Mieczysław Mołdawa’s monograph on the Gross-Rosen camp, _Gross-Rosen. Obóz koncentracyjny na Śląsku_ (Wrocław, 1990), was also taken into account. In describing prisoner transports to the Breslau II camp and their employment in the arms (war) industry, the publication by Barbara Sawicka, _Z poszukiwanej Warzary_ do _KL Gross-Rosen_ (Wałbrzych, 1994), was consulted and used. Andrzej Butar and Wacław Dominik’s work _Aś stali się problem i rozpoczę_ (Wrocław, 1980) is useful on the description of the evacuation.

The AMGR holds most of the available relevant documentation for this subcamp. Rich sources of information proved to be AMGR, sygn. 5758/DP (Materiały Klubu byłych Więźniów Gross-Rosen) as well as materials acquired by a former prisoner of Gross-Rosen, Roman Osłyn (AMGR, sygn.8751/DP). For camp officers, see AMGR, sygn. 7834/DP; in the matter of prisoner escapes from this subcamp, a report regarding the escape of a prisoner (AMGR, sygn. 6859/DP) was consulted. An equally valuable source of information and accounts of camp life are records of the AK-IPN in Warsaw and AK-IPN WR (copies of interrogations and judgments).

Anna Gołębiewska

trans. Gerard Majka
NOTES

2. AMGR, sygn. 47/150-151/MF, Świdnica District Court, September 24, 1947.

BRIEG [AKA PAMPITZ]

The Brieg subcamp, also known both in the literature and by former prisoners as Pampitz, began operating as a subcamp of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp in the summer of 1944. The camp was located 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) from the town of Brieg (later Brzeg), close to the village of Pampitz (Pepece), right after the curve in the road from Schüsseldorf (Zbójnica) to Konradswaldau (Przylesie). In August 1944, the Gross-Rosen prisoners replaced Jewish forced laborers who had been living in Brieg since November 1940 in a forced labor camp for Jews (ZALfJ) from the Dąbrowski coal region, working for Organisation Schmelt.

The Brieg subcamp began operating on August 7, 1944, when the first transport arrived from the Gross-Rosen concentration camp.

From its very inception, the Germans had set the camp’s daily population at 1,000 prisoners. Prisoners lost through death or being sent back to the main camp were constantly replenished by new transports. The initial transport of August 7 numbered 1,000 prisoners, 60 percent being Poles who had been brought to Gross-Rosen in an evacuation transport from Warsaw’s Pawiak prison; 20 percent were Russians (forced laborers and prisoners of war [POWs]); 10 percent were Poles arrested in the Reich and Poles from the Radom district and Kraków; and there were several Czechs. More transports arrived at the Brieg subcamp from the main camp by autumn of that year: 20 to 30 people in October and approximately 30 prisoners in the latter part of November.

The purpose of that transport was to make up for the shortage caused by the departure a few days earlier of a 40-person group of tradesmen prisoners, metalworkers, and carpenters, who had been removed to the main camp, then sent to other subcamps such as Gassen (Jasieni) and Niesky. Even earlier, on August 31, 3 former Russian POWs had been sent back from Brieg to Gross-Rosen headquarters; they had originally come to Gross-Rosen on August 2, 1944, from Stalag VIII A in Görlitz (Zgorzelec) for refusing to work and assaulting a citizen of the Reich. They were removed to the main camp for the death sentence to be carried out, as the Wrocław Gestapo had requested that the Sonderbehandlung (“special treatment”) procedure be applied to them. The next transport from Brieg that we know of left for the main camp on January 4, 1945.

The barracks of the previous Jewish camp totally changed appearance by the time the subcamp had been in operation for six months. The 70 small plywood barracks with no furnishings were converted into 10 larger ones, with bunks around the walls and a stove, for which there was never any fuel. Besides the residential barracks, there were 2 other large ones, holding the kitchen, infirmary, warehouse, glass workshop, carpentry shops, food and clothing warehouse, camp elder’s (Lagerältester) office, and camp office (Schreibstube). There were no sanitary facilities when the first transport arrived at camp; there were only latrines and troughs with faucets for washing installed in the open air. In time, an unheated bathhouse with showers was built, as well as a delousing station and a dayroom for the prisoner foremen. The entire camp was surrounded with two rows of barbed wire under high voltage. There were guard towers in the corners with searchlights and machine-gun stations.

The staff was composed of Luftwaffe soldiers and just a few SS men. The camp leader (Lagerführer) was SS-Obersturmführer Stosch, and the roll-call leader (Rapportführer) was Luftwaffe NCO (Feldwebel) Mayer; only one other staff member’s name—Gustav Schultz—is known. None of the camp’s staff ever appeared before a court after the war for their deeds at the Brieg camp.

As was the case at other camps, to help maintain discipline, the staff used what was the “prisoner government.” Since this camp was dominated by Poles, they also prevailed in the prisoner government. Initially, German criminal August Schneider was camp elder, but after he was recalled to Gross-Rosen, the job was assumed by a Silesian, Robert Nocno aka Notzon. Poles predominated among barrack chiefs, among them Józef Kuzioł, Bronisław Tomaszewski, Zenon Helczyk, Stanisław Kowalski, and Donat Petrol. Andrzej Kamiński from Poznań was initially First Schreiber (camp clerk), and after he left for Gross-Rosen, Henryk Suchowiak replaced him in the position. Arnold Kubański was Second Schreiber. The Brieg camp had an in-camp police force (Lagerpolizei); there were three: a German by the first name of Helmut; a Russian, Wasyl Dubowicz; and a Pole, Roman Burzykowski. Dr. Witold Mączka was the warehouse manager. The position of camp foreman (Lagerkapo) was held by a Pole, Jan Rura, who was also the camp translator. The following were Kapos: Józef Jerzy Sobocki, Józef Semran, Zygmunt Ulfik, Kiniarz, and Henryk Zawierucha, the antihero of the later group escape. There was a penal company whose Kapo was a Pole, Janusz Natorff, who later worked in the camp office. Four of the aforementioned were tried before Polish courts after the war. Two of them were acquitted.

All the prisoners at the Brieg subcamp were put to work converting the civil airfield into a military one. Various companies were involved in the job, including Vianova, Maszewski, and Forster. The prisoners worked in the following Commandos: Vianova-Kolonne, the largest; Mathias-Kolonne; Eimer-Kolonne; Baukommando; Transportkommando; Kieskommando; and beginning in December 1944, a Commando the prisoners called candy (Cukierek), whose prisoners were assigned to work in the Wehrmacht warehouses being evacuated from the front lines. Some prisoners worked in the workshops, repairing construction equipment, at the forge, the carpentry shop, and so on; they were supervised by
civilians, including blacksmith Paul Mlocek and an ethnic German (Volksdeutscher) named Kopaczka.

Work went on for 12 hours a day, six days a week, and in the autumn, Rapportführer Mayer hired out prisoners to work with local farmers on his own account. In exchange for their only day of rest, prisoners had the opportunity of getting additional food. As extra motivation, outstanding prisoners received camp "money" (Lagermark), which allowed them to supplement the meager camp food and buy pickled beets, cigarettes, or chewing tobacco at the canteen.

Despite the long hours of hard labor, some prisoners with an underground background did not give up thinking about fighting on and causing direct damage to the Germans. The sabotage operations they undertook on their own were designed to cause stoppages at work by doing things such as breaking machines.

The camp also had an infirmary (Rezir), handling from 40 to 100 patients at a time, where the foreman position (Revierkappo) was held by a Pole named Guździł (aka Kuździćioł), and the head doctor was Dr. Jan Aleksander Łukawski, with the orderlies (Pflege) being Warsaw actor Władysław Otto-Suski and Marian (aka Henryk) Dolata. The sanitary conditions prevailing at the infirmary were very primitive, and basic medicine was in short supply. At first, patients lay on the floor against the walls. Under these conditions, serious operations sometimes had to be performed when someone was injured at work. Approximately 50 prisoners died there in six months. One instance of death from scarlet fever was recorded, and several were due to beatings by the prisoners. The first to do so as early as August 14, 1944, were Johann Jankowski (prisoner 11504), and Leonit Juzwa (prisoner 11517). Former Soviet soldiers attempted to escape most frequently. The most important event was the planned escape. Because Kapo Henryk Zawierucha notified camp officials of the planned escape.

The Brieg subcamp operated until January 25, 1945, when all the healthy prisoners were driven on foot to the main camp (90 kilometers/56 miles), and the sick were trucked there. Then they all shared the fate of the main camp's prisoners, and in early February they were evacuated into the Reich by freight trains. Some prisoners of the Brieg subcamp wound up at Mittelbau or Buchenwald and some at Leitmeritz—a subsidiary of the Flossenbürg concentration camp.


Primary sources, especially personal accounts, are in AMGR, for example, catalog No. 4350/DP (collection of records on the investigation into the subsidiary of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp at Pe pie, Brieg Township, maintained by the AK-IPN Op from 1968 through 1978). Aleksandra Kobielec trans. Gerard Majka

BRÜNNLITZ

The Brünnlitz subcamp was the southernmost camp under the command of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp, located 48 kilometers (30 miles) from Brno in a small town in Moravia, named Brněnice in Czech. The decision to locate a camp there was made in Kraków in mid-1944. Due to the approaching front, German industrialist Oskar Schindler decided to move his factory and the Krakau-Plaszow camp prisoners working there to the town near which he had spent his youth. He located the transplanted arms factory (formerly Deutsche Emailwarenfabrik, DEF) on the site of the Hoffman cotton spinning mill (Löw-Beer Textile Company), and there he also built accommodations for the prisoners.

The Brünnlitz camp began operating on October 22, 1944. The initial transport included 700 men, who had received numbers 68821 through 69521 at Gross-Rosen. Then in November, 300 women arrived; after leaving the Krakau-
Plaszow subcamp, they went through a three-week quarantine at the Auschwitz concentration camp and received numbers 76201 through 76500 at Gross-Rosen. Subsequent transports arrived at Brünnlitz only in 1945. On January 29, 1945, 81 totally exhausted prisoners were admitted to the camp from the Golleschau subcamp, an Auschwitz subcamp that had been evacuated. These prisoners received camp numbers ranging from 77101 to 77181. On February 2, 1945, 6 prisoners were brought from the nearby Landskron prison, 5 of whom had previously been incarcerated at Auschwitz and 1 at Krakau-Plaszow. At Gross-Rosen, they received numbers 77182 through 77187. They were probably fugitives from evacuation transports. The next group of 30 prisoners arrived at camp only on April 11. They were prisoners who had been moved from the Geppersdorf subcamp, a Gross-Rosen subcamp that was being closed, and were identified with numbers 77001 to 77030. There were 801 male prisoners and 297 female prisoners in the camp on April 18, 1945. Because of the last transports, besides Polish Jews, there were also German, Hungarian, French, Czech, Slovak, Dutch, and Yugoslavian Jews in the camp, as well as 1 Frenchman and 2 German nationals (Reichsdeutsche). Although the prisoners had been sent here specially to work, the range of ages was atypical. The oldest prisoners had been born in 1881 (63 years old upon arriving at camp), while the youngest were born in 1930 (14 years old). The younger prisoners and their guardians had been withdrawn to the main camp in November 1944, and then they were moved to the Auschwitz concentration camp.

Special barracks had not been built for the prisoners at Brünnlitz. They were put in the factory building, at first even without bunks and basic sanitary facilities. Six rooms for prisoners: four for the men and two for the women, were prepared on the upper level of the factory building. The male section was partitioned from the female section by a wire fence. Only in time were a bathhouse, latrine, disinfecting station, and laundry put into operation on the upper level.

SS-Obersturmführer Josef Leipold was camp commander, and the staff was composed of 13 noncommissioned officers and 26 privates, as well as 4 guards. Leipold, born on November 10, 1913, in Alt Rohlau (Staré Role), of German nationality, a barber by trade, had belonged to the Nazi Party (NSDAP) since November 1939 and to the SS since August 20, 1938. He served at the Mauthausen, Lublin, Budzyń, Wieliczka, and Krakau-Plaszow concentration camps and, from October 1944 to April 1945, at Brünnlitz. After the war, he was tried by the Lublin District Court for the crimes he committed at those camps and by Decree of November 9, 1948, was sentenced to death, the perpetual forfeiture of public rights, and the loss of his property. The sentence was carried out. The following names of the staff are known: SS-Schütze Adolph, Daus, Emmel, Fredrychowitz, Gerhard, Hahn, Kirschner, Kürte, Laubenthal, Stapf, Stier, Unbescheid, Vogt, Weimar, and Wielenkampf; SS-Sturmmann Mähne and Mengenthaler; SS-Oberscharführer Moczk; SS-Obersturmführer Streithof; and SS-Rottenführer Zilch. Alexander Schubert, prisoner 69460, headed the “prisoner government.”

After the first transport arrived, the prisoners had a few days of rest, then were sent to work at the ammunition factory. Their first job was to install machines. Production began in early 1945. Prisoners worked there in two shifts, and the entire rhythm of their day was thoroughly delineated by the camp rules and regulations. Engineer Schönborn supervised the prisoners’ work, aided by Czech and German civilian foremen, such as Dembina and Müller, whose attitude toward the prisoners was not too objectionable. Despite camp commander Leipold’s efforts, the effects of the prisoners’ work were rather poor. Several prisoners were sent to work at the nearby mill.

As in other camps, roll call took place twice a day here, too, although it was not as arduous as elsewhere, since attendance was checked at the factory production hall before work in the morning and after work in the evening.

Despite Schindler’s goodwill, the food at this camp did not differ from standard camp fare. The daily ration included 25 decagrams of bread (8.8 ounces) and coffee in the morning, a liter (1 quart) of palatable soup at noon, and bread and soup at 8:00 P.M. The night shift received an extra half liter (1 pint) of soup.

An infirmary (Revier) was set up on the ground floor of the factory building. Dr. Chaim Hilfstein, prisoner 68895, was appointed its head, and the following persons also worked there: Dr. Aleksander Bieberstein, 68913; Dr. Juda Katz, 69149; and Dr. Matilde Löw, 76354. Dental procedures were performed by Friedrich Beck, prisoner 69094, and Rudolf Brechner, prisoner 69350. SS-Obersturmführer Streithof served as the SS medic (SDG) from headquarters. Several cases of scarlet fever were noted throughout the camp’s operation, as well as five cases of typhus, which was successfully kept a secret from the German staff; thanks to the disinfecting station that had been set up, there was no epidemic. Approximately 60 people died throughout the camp’s operation; they were buried in the community cemetery at Deutsch Bielau (Německá Bělá).

Although the conditions at Brünnlitz were severe, life was easier there in comparison to the camps through which the prisoners had come earlier. Also, the local population demonstrated great sympathy for the prisoners, providing them with extra portions of bread whenever they could and even sweet bread for Christmas. Near the end of the war, when the food situation kept growing worse, the Czech Doubek, Brünnlitz mill owner, provided the camp with barley for soup, which allowed the prisoners to survive the war in tolerable condition.

People did not seek salvation through escape at Brünnlitz. The festivity for Schindler’s birthday in April 1945 was a camp event that unquestionably deviated from the norm. The prisoners were given sugar, margarine, and sweet bread at that time.

Camp commander Leipold and the guards were enlisted into the German army in late April 1945 and were to be sent back to the front. When Leipold, a stickler for camp rules and regulations, left, the entire camp breathed a sigh of relief.
The information that the war was over had already reached the Brünnlitz subcamp prisoners on May 6, 1945, when all the camp's prisoners were gathered in the factory production hall and Schindler declared that the war had ended. All Germans were to surrender arms by midnight, and the prisoners were to be set free. That evening the SS men who had been guarding the camp left in an unknown direction, along with the factory's German civilian workers. Factory director Schindler left the night of May 6–7, seen off with sorrow by the Jews he saved, having obtained from the prisoners a travel affidavit of his exceptional stance during the war.

A delegation of the Brneč National Council arrived at the camp the morning of May 7 and made sure there were no contagious diseases at the camp, after which it provided the prisoners with meat, milk, and other food products. The prisoners spent two days alone in the camp. The hastily organized police force, recruited from among the members of the camp's underground organization, was armed with weapons that had been stored in Schindler's residence, as well as those that had been abandoned by the camp guards. The formation's job was to maintain order in the camp, although there had already been a lynching there, in consequence of which Kapo Willi was hanged in the factory production hall; he had had already been a lynching victim to that same lynching.

It was only on May 10 that the Soviet Army under the command of Colonel Safran entered the camp. A Soviet and Polish committee was formed and issued the prisoners clothing from the warehouse. On May 25, a special train left for Kraków. Sick prisoners were taken to a hospital in Police.

**SOURCES** Primary sources, especially personal accounts, are in AMGR; see, for example, AMGR, catalog No. 4108/DP—Liste der weiblichen Häflinge des AL Brünnlitz, April 18, 1945 (original in YVA). catalog No. 4107/DP—Liste der männlichen Häflinge des AL Brünnlitz, Stand vom April 18, 1945 (original in YVA).


**BUNZLAU I**

Bunzlau I was formed in May 1944 when the Gross-Rosen concentration camp command took over what had been the Organisation Schmeldt forced labor camp for Jews, located at No. 2 Menzelstrasse (Staroszkolna Strasse) in Bunzlau (Bolesławiec) on the premises of the Hubert Land Bunzlauer Holzindustrie wood products manufacturing plant. That camp had been in existence since June 1941 and housed Polish Jews from the Dąbrowski coal region in Upper Silesia Province; they were put to work making barracks, camp furniture, and decoy airplanes ordered by the Luftwaffe command. In the final phase of the camp's existence, it held approximately 730 men and a small group of women put to work in the kitchen and on the camp grounds. The most numerous group of prisoners were men in their early twenties.

The camp was surrounded by a barbed-wire fence; it consisted of six wooden barracks, of which four were for the prisoners; the fifth was for the kitchen, bathhouse, and shoemaker workshop; and the sixth was for the infirmary. The living barracks, accommodating approximately 200 people each, had four rooms furnished with bunk beds, tables, and benches. The sanitary conditions were atrocious, the barracks were rife with dirt, and the bugs were a plague.

When the Organisation Schmeldt was disbanded, many of its Lower Silesian camps were put under the command of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp during 1944. The Bunzlau camp was also reorganized on May 1 of that year. A selection was conducted, after which only about 450 men remained in the camp (the fate of the others is unknown), who were assigned prisoner numbers in the 35000 series three weeks later. The number of prisoners rose to 1,000 by the end of the year due to the arrival of a transport of several hundred Hungarian Jews from the Auschwitz concentration camp in early June 1944, as well as several smaller groups from other Gross-Rosen subcamps.

The subcamp initially operated under the name of Arbeitslager Bunzlau; because another Gross-Rosen subcamp was put into operation at Bunzlau in the summer of 1944, the name was differentiated by adding the Roman numeral I. The organizational change did not cause any basic modification in the Hubert Land plant's production profile, although some of the prisoners were to work expanding it, namely, on the erection of a new production hall in which the Becco company then did tank overhauls.

In August 1944, the central Armaments Office (Rüstungsamt) notified the Army Armaments Inspectorate (Rüstungsinspektion) VIII in Breslau (Wrocław) that it was commissioning the plant with the production of airfoils for the Focke Wulf (Fw) 190 fighter planes being manufactured at the nearby Aslau airfield. The prisoners working on the production formed the “Weserflug” Commando (named after the Bremen aircraft plant, part of which was evacuated to Bunzlau). In December 1944, a 24-person Commando was also formed to operate the military warehouses (Heereszugsamt) at Rauscha (Ruszów).

SS-Uberscharführer Erich Schrammel, famous for his cruel treatment of prisoners at Gross-Rosen concentration camp, was the commander (Lagerführer) of the subcamp for the first four to five months; he was then replaced by SS-Hauptscharführer Willi Michael, then probably by SS-Uberscharführer Müller.
Members of the Gross-Rosen SS-Totenkopfstandarten 12th Company served guard duty. The prisoner "government" was headed by German criminal prisoners who had come from the main camp, where they were famous for their brutal treatment of their fellow prisoners. “Ossi” Weeks held the post of camp elder (Lagerältester), and Kurt Büttner was Oberkapo; local prisoners held the block elder (Blockältester) and Kapo positions.

The subcamp existed until February 10, 1945, when the prisoners were evacuated on foot due to the Red Army detachments approaching Bunzlau. The approximately 120 people who were sick or unable to march were allowed to stay in the infirmary (Revier). The Russians liberated them a few hours later. Meanwhile, the evacuation column headed west, reaching the Mittelbau concentration camp a few hours later. The primary marching column, numbering approximately 600 prisoners, among whom were some harried to carts containing food and the SS men’s belongings, headed west through Görlitz, Bautzen, the vicinity of Dresden, Leipzig, Halle, Aschersleben, and Quedlinburg to Nordhausen. On March 15, 1945, after 32 days of marching, the prisoners, who were then sent back to the main camp. After the second group of prisoners arrived from Gross-Rosen, a makeshift infirmary (Revier) was set up in the attic, where the physician was Dr. Jan Wójcinski. Bunk beds were set up in the prisoners’ quarters; the bugs were an unbearable plague.

Because the Soviet forces were advancing quickly during their Lower Silesian offensive begun on February 8, 1945, the camp was hurriedly evacuated in the early morning hours of February 11; sick prisoners and those unable to march were allowed to stay, although they were sent to the infirmary (Revier) at Bunzlau I, where Soviet soldiers liberated them a few hours later. The primary marching column, numbering approximately 600 prisoners, among whom were some harnessed to carts containing food and the SS men’s belongings, headed west through Görlitz, Bautzen, the vicinity of Dresden, Leipzig, Halle, Aschersleben, and Quedlinburg to Nordhausen. On March 15, 1945, after 32 days of marching, the evacuation column reached the Mittelbau concentration camp; the column now numbered only 441 persons (266 Poles, 147 Russians, 6 Germans, 5 Frenchmen, 5 Yugoslavians, 4 Croatians, 2 Belgians, 2 Italians, 2 stateless persons, 1 Czech, and 1 ethnic German [Volksdeutscher]); the rest succumbed to the hardship of the march, hunger, and shootings by the guards. Another 37 prisoners died during their stay at Mittelbau. In early April, there was another evacuation to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where liberation occurred on April 15.

**BUNZLAU II**

The Bunzlau II subcamp was formed in October 1944 on the upper floors of a textile factory building at the Concordia Spinnerei und Weberei GmbH in Bunzlau (now Bolesławiec). In 1943 the plant had already been adapted to meet the needs of the Weser Flugzeugbau GmbH aircraft plant, moved there from Bremen, which was threatened by Allied air raids. The plant manufactured aircraft parts, and in August 1944 the Armaments Office (Rüstungsamt) commissioned the plant with the production of airfoils for the Focke Wulf 190 fighter planes being assembled at the Aslau airfield production facilities.

The initial group of prisoners was sent to Bunzlau II from the Gross-Rosen concentration camp on October 2, 1944; it numbered approximately 300 people. A second group arrived in early November and was housed in the attic of the factory building. Several small groups from Gross-Rosen were also sent in December and January 1945, and approximately 80 prisoners were transferred from the Aslau subcamp in several batches. A total of 600 to 700 prisoners were put in the subcamp, of whom 60 percent were Polish and 33 percent were Russian, the rest being of other nationalities.

**SOURCES** The author provides a more in-depth examination of the Bunzlau II subcamp in AL Bunzlau I i AL Bunzlau II : filie KL Gross-Rosen w Bolesławcu (Wałbrzych: Muzeum Gross-Rosen, 2004). Most of the significant primary sources are available in the archives of AMGR.

Alfred Konieczny
CHRISTIANSTADT

In the town of Christianstadt (present-day Krzystkowice) there was a women's labor camp (Frauenarbeitslager, FAL) for Jews that was a subcamp of Gross-Rosen. The camp most probably came into being in the first half of 1944. The first mention of it is in a document listing the subcamps and companies employing Gross-Rosen prisoners, dated June 9, 1944.

In Christianstadt itself and the immediate environs, work had been under way since 1940 to expand what had initially been the IG Farben Works chemical factory, then the Dynamit AG Nobel plant. Forced laborers, prisoners of war (POWs), and Jews from the forced labor camp (ZAL) also known as Organisation Schmelt were employed at the building site. In September 1944, two transports of Jewish women from the Auschwitz concentration camp were brought to one of the camps they had vacated, designated Number 10. These are the first known transports to Christianstadt. There were 500 women in each of them. The Jewish women from the second transport came from the Lodz ghetto, which had been officially closed in the summer of 1944. Another transport of 201 women arrived in early January 1945.1

The numbers of the three known transports show that at least 1,200 women were sent to Christianstadt. Little is known about the transports leaving Christianstadt, although two such groups are known: on or about November 20, 1944, a small transport of 20 women was sent to Parschnitz, another Gross-Rosen subcamp. The women were admitted there on November 24.2 According to the account of Tojba Sawickowicz,3 they were a selected group of women that had committed offenses of some sort. On February 12, 1945, after Christianstadt had been evacuated, 2 more women from the Christianstadt camp were also admitted to the Parschnitz camp.4

The Christianstadt prisoners were Jewish women of Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Dutch, and Austrian nationality.

There is divergent information on the camp administration. Alfred Konieczny has determined that K. Siewanstock held the post of Lagerführerin (camp leader), and a Jewish woman from Lodz named Fryda was one of the barracks chiefs. The account of Czech prisoner Anna Hyndrakova provides more detailed but differing information.5 She says that the Lagerführerin was named Emmie Harms, and her assistant was SS-Oberaufseherin Lina Pohl. Hyndrakova also lists the names of other camp staff members but does not provide the posts each person held: Kathie Tietz, Weigert, Daume, Methar, and Friedl, as well as two aliases or nicknames—Esmeralda and Snebuka.

The prisoners primarily worked for the Dynamit AG Nobel company, as well as for Siemens-Bauunion GmbH (Siemens Construction Union), Boswau und Knauer, Becker und Zelle, Gebrüder Hermcke, Bauunternehmen Hamburg, the Reckmann company, and the Sturchan (Stuchan) company.6 Initially, almost all of the women worked for the Siemens-Bauunion company. They were also organized into what was called a “forest commando.” The women prepared the site for a road and railway, they had to cut down trees and dig out the trunks, and they shoveled earth and sand. With their bare hands, they loaded and unloaded shipments of rocks that they then had to break up with heavy hammers. They also carried rails and set railroad tracks. Women from 15 to 50 years of age were put to work on those projects.

Various accidents and injuries would occur frequently during that hard physical labor, since the women received no protective clothing, not even ordinary work gloves. Several German foremen oversaw the work in the commando. Two of them were Willi Hoin and Willi Kreuz. Hadassa Debrecka, a former prisoner, also mentions that she installed water pipes.7

Later the women’s main workplace was the Dynamit AG Nobel plant, located 4 or 5 kilometers (2.5 to 3.1 miles) from the camp. The most dangerous jobs at the plant included filling grenades with explosives and cleaning the grenades. The women were burned frequently, and the continuous contact with the toxic substances in the explosives made them very weak. The prisoners’ work was very hard, and combined with malnutrition and lack of sleep, it caused considerable emaciation in many women, sometimes manifested in muscle spasm attacks reminiscent of epilepsy. Similar to the forest commando, the prisoners working in the factory were also punished with penal roll calls lasting many hours, during which the prisoners had to stand regardless of the weather. This limited their rest time between shifts at work, leaving them with only an hour or two of sleep at times. For more serious offenses, such as attempting to escape or avoiding going to work, they faced being locked in a basement or having their food taken away. There was an infirmary (Revier) at the camp, and in exceptional situations sick women would not go to work for a short time; however, prisoner accounts mention instances of the more seriously ill inmates being taken off to Auschwitz, where death inevitably awaited them.

The fate of several women who were pregnant when they came to the camp is a special chapter in Christianstadt’s history. Shortly after the women had arrived at the subcamp, the Lagerführerin ordered pregnant women to report, saying they would be moved to another camp and to easier work. The order caused a considerable amount of uneasiness. In spite of that, several women reported. They were all taken away from camp. Those who did not report had to hide their condition.

In the early autumn of 1944, a Hungarian prisoner gave birth to a stillborn child. The SS women wanted to watch the
delivery and thus escorted the prisoners out to work later than usual. The SS women buried the baby’s body in the forest. The day after the delivery, the midwife prisoner had to go to work as normal in the forest commando. When the German foreman named Hoin, who supervised the work in the commando, learned of the event, he ordered that a makeshift bed (made of various rags and empty cement sacks) be prepared in the tool room. He put the midwife there and let her rest, at least while she was at work. 8

On November 3, 1944, a prisoner named Fuchs gave birth to a healthy baby girl. Friedrich Entress, the SS doctor from Gross-Rosen who was inspecting the Christianstadt subcamp, filed a report about that to headquarters on December 11, 1944. 9 We do not know what happened to the child nor to the other children who were born shortly before the evacuation.

The evacuation occurred on February 2 or 3, 1945. The women were escorted out of the camp under the surveillance of a detachment of uniformed men commanded by an SS man with the rank of Obersturmführer. The evacuation route led southward. On foot, the prisoners reached the territory of what was then the “Sudetengau” (later part of the Czech Republic). They continued toward Draždany via the towns of Cinwald (Zinnwald, now Cinovec), Dubí (Eichwald), and Komorné (Kommern), until they reached Most (Brüx). There, the column was directed toward Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad). Four weeks after the evacuation had begun, the column reached a place called Cheb (Eger). There, the prisoners were loaded onto freight cars and taken to Zelle near Hanover. The march then brought them to Bergen-Belsen.

**SOURCES**


Archival materials can be found in the AMGR in Wałbrzych (accounts, questionnaires, transport lists), as well as in YVA in Jerusalem (memories and accounts of former female prisoners of this camp). Details can be found in the footnotes.

**NOTES**

2. AMGR, sygn. Catalog No. 7069/DP, List of transport from Christianstadt labor camp to Parschnitz labor camp.
3. AMGR, Catalog No. 124/3331/MF, Account of Tójba Świdkiewicz.
4. AMGR, Catalog No. 7069/DP, List of transport from Christianstadt labor camp to Parschnitz labor camp.
5. AMGR, Catalog No. 6305/DP-A, Account of Anna Hyndrakova.
7. AMGR, Catalog No. 24/5480/MF, Account of Hadassa Debrecka.
8. AMGR, Catalog No. 6305/DP-A, Anna Hyndrakova’s questionnaire.

**DYHERNFURTH I**

During World War II in Dyhernfurth (later Brzeg Dolny), a town located on the Oder River approximately 30 kilometers (19 miles) northwest of Breslau (Wrocław), a factory of the IG Farben company was set up, where chemical warfare agents were made. Gross-Rosen concentration camp prisoners were put to work during the factory’s construction and then in manufacturing the gases. The decision to erect the Dyhernfurth factory had been made in December 1939, under an agreement between IG Farben and the Chief Armed Forces Command. IG Farben’s sister company Anorgana GmbH was given the job. Luranil Baugesellschaft mbH Ludwigshafen, a construction company founded by IG Farben in January 1940, was the building contractor.

Using its experience from Auschwitz III-Monowitz, IG Farben reached an agreement with Gross-Rosen headquarters in 1943, in consequence of which two subcamps were established at the Anorgana works.

The Dyhernfurth I camp, situated on the immediate premises of the Anorgana factory, was a top-secret detachment (Geheimniskommando). The first transport arrived there in mid-1943. The 37-prisoner group included 16 Germans, several Russians, 3 Czechs, and Poles who had come to Gross-Rosen from Auschwitz. Later on, the camp’s population was increased, and any losses through death were made up by bringing in small groups of prisoners from the main camp. Most of the prisoners sent to Dyhernfurth I had the annotation “RU” (Rückkehr unerwünscht, return undesirable) in their records. This subcamp remained small throughout its existence; there were approximately 300 prisoners living there at its peak population. Although Poles predominated, there were also Russians, Czechs, and Germans, as well as 2 Gypsies. Once put there, the prisoners were never moved to another camp until the camp was evacuated.

The prisoners lived in a newly built, two-level brick barracks that was divided into rooms (Stuben); 40 prisoners slept in one such room on two-tiered bunks. The barracks was isolated from the rest of the factory by a barbed wire, with watchtowers at the corners. A railway siding ran along the fence, and underground liquid gas tanks ran along the siding. It was incredibly cold in the barrack because all the windows had been knocked out to ventilate the space. Although there was no bathhouse on the camp premises, the prisoners used the showers at the factory.

The Anorgana factory chiefly produced the gas warfare agent Tabun (T38), which was in a liquid state and extremely toxic, directly affecting the nervous system. Later, they also made Sarin (T46). Tabun poisoning occurs via inhalation,
through the skin, the digestive tract, or the mucous membranes, and is complicated by the fact that none of the senses provide any warning that the gas is present, while the slightest dose causes shortness of breath, convulsions, and paralysis, often resulting in death. The Dyhernfurth I prisoners worked in close contact with the gases. They worked in a separate production hall of the factory, additionally surrounded by a double row of barbed wire, and only the civilian workers employed there, the prisoners, and the camp leader (Lagerführer) were allowed in the production hall. The other SS men stayed outside. The doors and windows of the production hall where the prisoners worked were tightly sealed, and the hall was ventilated the whole time with air mixed with ammonia. The main fixture in the hall was the gas filling station for bombs and artillery shells, their warehouse, the labeling and inspection stations, and so on. Tabun was used to fill 100-kilogram (220-pound) aircraft bombs and the artillery shells. The entire manufacturing process occurred on a conveyor system. The shells or bombs were placed on feeder conveyers handling several tons per day; then they were filled with gas, and every shell went through a low-pressure chamber to check for leaks. The prisoners’ jobs also included cleaning the underground gas tanks and inspecting the equipment there. Work at the factory started at 7:00 A.M. and lasted eight hours; but afterward, the prisoners were sent to clear the woods or do other earthmoving projects, such as draining the pond, until dusk.

Some prisoners who were put to work directly filling shells were outfitted with protective masks and overalls, but not all of them were equipped with masks. Unfortunately, even those who had them would get poisoned. Teary and pussy eyes were common, as was partial blindness, especially at dusk, severe headaches, shortness of breath, and swelling.

There was no infirmary or doctor in the camp; there was a corner set aside in the living quarters barrack called the “infirmary,” where Marek Wawrzyniak, serving as orderly, was in charge. In special cases, a doctor was brought in from the Dyhernfurth II camp 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) away, or plant doctor Dr. K. Martens helped, although as a civilian he was not allowed to enter the camp itself.

Chemical poisoning was frequent among prisoners and caused several instances of death, but the exact figures in this regard are unknown. The dead were carted away to the crematorium at Gross-Rosen.

Not only normal work with the gas caused poisonings; prisoners have also stated that experiments were conducted on them to test the toxicity of the cargo during transport. This caused most prisoner poisonings, as Tabun causes mild poisoning after just two minutes of exposure to an atmosphere containing only 0.0005 milligrams per liter of air.

Despite the bonus for hard workers, the camp food was inadequate. For breakfast before roll call, prisoners received an ersatz flour milk soup, and later at the factory they got a piece of bread and slice of horse-meat sausage. Lunch consisted of approximately one liter (one quart) of watery rutabaga soup, sometimes with potatoes. The hour break (from noon to 1:00 P.M.) barely sufficed to reach the camp, where soup was being distributed in the canteen. For supper in the evening, prisoners received one loaf of bread per four people, margarine or a spoonful of jam, and unsweetened black ersatz coffee.

The staff consisted of approximately 20 SS men. Initially, SS-Scharführer Karl Gallasch, born November 17, 1897, was the unit leader (Kommandoführer). (He was tried in Wrocław for his crimes at the Gross-Rosen, Dyhernfurth, Fürstenchinen, and Reichenau camps on May 17, 1947, and sentenced to death. Just before the sentence was carried out, he committed suicide in his cell.) A reorganization was conducted in January 1944. One camp leader, SS-Obersturmführer Karl Brauer, born September 29, 1893, headed both camps. Although he was notorious for holding a hanging of refugees and led the camp’s evacuation, he was never tried in court. SS-Unterscharführer Martin Klütsch, born October 20, 1912, in Cologne, was roll-call leader (Rapportführer). (The Świdnica District Court sentenced him to death on November 10, 1948. He was executed on July 3, 1949.) We also know the following names of staff: SS-Rottenführer Walter Dahms, born June 19, 1911; guard commander SS-Unterscharführer Johann Heinz (tried by Świdnica District Court in 1948–1949; he died of tuberculosis during his trial), and SS-Rottenführer Alfred Aller.

As at other camps, here, too, the Germans formed what was called the “prisoner government” to more easily maintain camp discipline; it was headed by camp elder (Lagerältester) Alfred (aka Bernard) Mikołajczyk; Ryszard Kurowski was block elder (Blockältester), the Kapo was Berst, and his assistant was Krauze.

Despite the harsh regime prevailing in camp and the fact that prisoners basically did not leave the factory premises, three Russians attempted to escape in late 1944. Unfortunately, the attempt ended tragically; all were killed.

The camp did not escape the hardships of evacuation. On January 24, 1945, all healthy prisoners were moved out of the camp as they set off on a death march along with the Dyhernfurth II prisoners, despite the freezing winter. The trek to the main camp lasted two and a half days. The lucky ones who survived the journey were not spared the difficulties of further evacuations. They were taken into the Reich along with the other prisoners of the main camp in early February; the majority would end up in the Mauthausen concentration camp.

**SOURCES**

Archival records are held in AMGR; see Catalog No. 13/28/MF, 5242/DP, 5913/DP—prosecution records in the case of Karl Gallasch; Catalog No. 5905/1-25/DP—records on Martin Klütsch; Catalog No. 108/1/MF, 6244/DP, 6298/DP—Dyhernfurth II voucher applications and payroll for
DYHERNFURTH II [AKA LAGER ELFENHAIN]

During World War II in Dyhernfurth (later Brzeg Dolny), a town located on the Oder River approximately 30 kilometers (19 miles) northwest of Breslau (Wrocław) a factory of the IG Farben company was set up, where chemical warfare agents were made. Gross-Rosen concentration camp prisoners were put to work during the factory's construction as well as in manufacturing the gases. The decision to erect the Dyhernfurth factory had been made in December 1939, under an agreement between IG Farben and the Chief Armed Forces Command. IG Farben's sister company Anorgana GmbH was given the job. Luranil Baugesellschaft mbH Ludwigshafen, a construction company founded by IG Farben in January 1940, was the building contractor.

Using its experience from Auschwitz III-Monowitz, IG Farben reached an agreement with the Gross-Rosen concentration camp headquarters in 1943, in consequence of which two Gross-Rosen subcamps were established at the Anorgana works.

The Dyhernfurth II camp, also known as Lager Elfenhain, was established in the summer or autumn of 1943. The camp's prisoners were not put to work making or filling shells with gas but exclusively on construction projects on the Anorgana company premises.

Initially, the Luranil company used only Jewish forced laborers from the nearby Organisation Schmelt camp in existence since 1942 to work on the factory expansion. The camp's population ranged from 180 Polish Jews in the initial period to 600 to 800 prisoners toward the end of its operation. A decision was made in 1943 for the Gross-Rosen concentration camp to take control of the camp's prisoners, but for unknown reasons, construction of a new camp was started instead of expanding the existing one. Prisoners from the Jewish forced labor camp (ZALfJ) were sent to work on its construction. The ZALfJ closed down entirely on January 10, 1944, when there was a selection conducted on the Jews left at Dyhernfurth, and they were moved to the newly erected, but already operating, Dyhernfurth II camp, which was located in a small pine forest about a kilometer (0.6 miles) away from the Anorgana plant. The camp was composed of 30 barracks, including eight two-level brick buildings, while the rest were wooden.

The camp kitchen and staff accommodations were located outside the barbed-wire fence. Although new, the barracks were damp, and in the winter they were for the most part unheated. Initially, there was neither running water nor toilets in the camp. Buckets for feces were set out on the walkways at night.

In the initial months of the camp's existence in 1943, the prisoner population was under 450. However, a large influx of prisoners was recorded there, starting in January 1944. The aforementioned transfer of Jews from the Organisation Schmelt occurred on January 10. Transports with non-Jewish prisoners started arriving from the main camp, primarily Poles and Russians, but there were also Czechs, French, Croats, Italians, Germans, and Dutch. The first such transport had arrived at Dyhernfurth in February and numbered approximately 1,000 prisoners. About 500 Hungarian Jews arrived by transport from Auschwitz on June 8. The highest population on any one day was 3,037 prisoners on October 27, 1944. That was barely one-third of the planned number of 9,700 prisoners.

The prisoners were primarily put to work on earthmoving and construction projects, transporting cement or sand, and unloading railroad cars. A small number of them were put to work as metalworkers, clerks, and room painters. In addition, ten prisoners were put to work as draftsmen. In April 1944, the company began training support workers in building tradesmen jobs.

A new motivational system was introduced in 1944 at Dyhernfurth. It consisted of bonus vouchers paid to prisoners, which could be spent at the camp canteen. Prisoners could buy cigarettes or small amounts of food with the vouchers. The bonus system also included prisoner-functionaries; they received what were called “management bonuses,” which were vouchers worth from 1.5 Reichsmark (RM) to 2.5 RM per week. But the bonuses did not solve the problem of the hunger prevailing in camp. The small food rations of fewer than 1,000 calories a day were reduced even further by thefts by the SS men. The factory issued prisoners performing the hardest labor an extra portion of bread and a small piece of horse-meat sausage. The prisoner kitchen was manned by 16 people and had a 3-person “potato” commando to help, which only peeled vegetables and potatoes.

The wretched food, ubiquitous violence, and awful conditions were the cause of many diseases and the large death rate, even though there had been an infirmary (Revier) in Dyhernfurth II from the start. It was initially located on the ground floor of one of the brick barracks. It consisted of two wards of 36 beds each, plus an admissions room, a washing space doubling as a morgue, and a small room serving as astoreroom. The patient population was about 60. In time, the infirmary was expanded into another barrack, and the number of patients admitted rose to 500 to 600. The most frequently encountered conditions were: weakness, malnutrition, starvation dropsy, and ulceration of unhealed wounds caused by beating. The position of infirmary Kapo was held by Dziubek. Two doctors, two dentists, and nine orderlies attended to patients, but they had very few medical supplies at their disposal, so a stay in the hospital only gave patients the opportunity for a short rest from work. The death rate at camp...
was approximately 20 to 30 prisoners per week. The bodies of the dead were carted out once per week to the crematorium at the main camp. Selections were conducted at the camp regularly, and prisoners unfit to work were sent back to the main camp.

There were several escape attempts in camp. Anyone caught was not sent back to the main camp but was executed on the spot.

SS-Obersturmführer Peter Brandenburg, born on February 10, 1889, in Hörde, was initially camp commander; he was replaced by SS-Obersturmführer Karl Brauer in January 1944. Of the 200 members of the camp's staff, the following 8 men's names are known: SS-Unterscharführer Bruno Martin Bönning (sentenced to 2 years in prison in 1947 by the Toruń Court); SS-Rottenführer Konrad Kumpf; SS-Rottenführer Anton Maurer; SS-Sturmmann Jakob Schmitzer; SS-Schütze Johann Schmitter; SS-Rottenführer Johann Tschokan; SS-Hauptscharführer Julius Uhl, roll-call leader (Rapportführer); SS-Sturmmann Peter Wrbanatz; SS-Rottenführer Peter Wolf; SS-Schütze Otto Schwanke (sentenced to 3 years' incarceration in 1947 by Toruń District Court); Johann Theil (aka Thell) (sentenced to 6 years' incarceration in 1948 by the Świdnicna Court); SS-Oberscharführer Erwin, Uhl's successor as Rapportführer, infamous among the prisoners; SS-Scharführer Franz Skowronek, born October 4, 1891; SS-Rottenführer Fritz Herzog, the medical orderly (SDG) in charge of the hospital; Block Leader (Blockführer) Schulz; Konrad Giela; Walter Meisen; Herman Schöps, born August 2, 1901 (sentenced to 2 years' incarceration in 1947 by the Jelenia Góra Court); Assistant Commander Max Kant, born February 13, 1894 (sentenced to 12 years' incarceration in 1947 by the Wałbrzych Court and conditionally released in 1956); a block leader Weiss; August Peterek; Voelke; SS-Sturmmann Herbert Piotrowski; SS-Rottenführer Ludwig Hackler, the person in charge of the labor commandos; SS-Unterscharführer Wiese; SS-Unterscharführer Wiese; SS-Unterscharführer Hlavicka; SS-Unterscharführer Blume; SS-Unterscharführer Bayer; SS-Unterscharführer Petrovic, head of the prisoners' and SS men's kitchen; SS-Unterscharführer Herbert Hanke, assistant supervisor of camp commandos; SS-Schütze Andreas Adamy; SS-Rottenführer Anton Balthasar; and SS-Rottenführer Ottomar Aichhdzer.

The staff had a “prisoner government” of about 100 prisoners to help them. It was headed by Camp Elder (Lagerältester) Guhr, Kapo Schmitz, and Oberkapo Stanisław Szulc. Only German professional criminals (BV) held positions as block elders (Blockälteste).

The bloodiest excerpt of the Dyhernfurth II camp's history was its evacuation on foot. Production at the Dyhernfurth works went on until January 1945, when the factory was hurriedly evacuated, and the civilian staff was escorted across the Oder on the night of January 23–24. The toxic gases and ammunition that had been manufactured stayed behind at camp. The prisoners were evacuated at the same time, leaving the sick who could not walk in camp. The 2-kilometer-long (1.2-mile-long) column of emaciated human skeletons still had to pull sleds with the SS men's belongings behind them through the snow-covered fields, leaving the main roads for the civil population under evacuation and for the army. In very low temperatures, clad in only thin clothing, the prisoners had to walk the 60 kilometers (37 miles) to the Gross-Rosen main camp. Any prisoners who stopped marching were shot. They traveled the 30 kilometers (19 miles) to Neumarkt (later Środa Śląska) the first day, leaving the bodies of over 200 shot prisoners on the way. The night's stay in the abandoned buildings of a sugar mill did not provide them with a moment's rest; approximately 100 prisoners froze to death that evening.

For reasons unknown, the evacuation of the sick people left in the camp was ordered the next day. Unclothed, wrapped only in horse-cloth blankets, their legs wrapped in rags substituting for shoes, they were also herded in the direction of Środa Śląska. The bedridden who could not stay on their legs were loaded onto wagons. But they were only driven to the railroad bridge over the Oder. There, they were all shot, their bodies thrown into the water. Many of those who had set out toward Gross-Rosen were shot along the way. The sick people who managed to reach Środa Śląska were put in a former slaughterhouse, where systematic executions by shooting were begun on the order of the local district leader (Kreisleiter), Ernst Dickmann, of the German Home Guard (Volkssturm) squad (the camp escort had fled), which were stopped only upon intervention by the Wehrmacht detachment alarmed by residents. (Dickmann, born July 7, 1911, in Niederdorfte, was sentenced to death by a Criminal Court Decree on December 10, 1945, for murdering 93 sick prisoners; the sentence was carried out.) The surviving ill people were transported to the Gross-Rosen main camp the next day.

After spending a few days at the main camp, they and the other prisoners had to undertake the hardships of evacuation all over again, this time by train into the Reich. Many of them did not survive that trip.

The city and factory at Dyhernfurth were taken by the 27th Corps of the 13th Soviet Army without a fight on January 26, 1945. The Germans retreated across the Oder in a panic, destroying the ferry and railway bridge. On February 4, German forces retook the factory with the intention of destroying it and concealing the truth about the place. The Germans retreated on February 6 when the Soviets brought in more forces.


Archival records are held in AMGR; see Catalog No. 13/28/MF, 5242/DP, 5913/DP—prosecution records in the case of Karl Gallasch; Catalog No. 5903/1-25/DP—records on Martin Klütisch; Catalog No. 108/1/MF, 6244/DP, 6298/
DP—Dyhernfurth II bonus [voucher] applications and payroll for August 1944; Catalog No. 5917/DP—transcript of prosecution records on the investigation of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp subsidiaries at Brzeg Dolny, maintained by the AK-IPN WR (DS 1/68); also the collection of 305 Dyhernfurth camp prisoner accounts and questionnaires kept at AMGR; 97 camp letters from Dyhernfurth kept at AMGR; and the NMT Trial of the management of IG Farben.

Aneta Malek
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES
1. The date of the establishment and evacuation of the camp comes from the work of Alfred Konieczny.
2. The information regarding numbers comes from AMGR, imprint 7/119/MF and 6835/5 and the account imprint 5387/DP.

FRIEDLAND

Friedland (Mierzów since 1945) is a small mountain town with roots dating back to the fourteenth century, picturesque located at an elevation of 1,640 feet in the Steine (Polish: Scinawka) River valley. The town’s several thousand people have been involved with the textile and lumber industries for centuries. Several labor camps began operating in Friedland at the very start of World War II; they were chiefly for displaced Poles (entire families, including children, were held there), Soviet prisoners of war (POWs), and then Italians. They were put to work at local farms, in the granary, at the flax mill, and in other industrial plants.\(^1\)

The decision to locate a subcamp of Gross-Rosen in Friedland was made in 1944 because of difficult circumstances in finding workers due to the situation at the fronts and the relocation of an ever-increasing number of industrial plants to Lower Silesia (German: Niederschlesien), as well as the shift over to wartime production at long-established industries.

The Friedland camp was situated about 1 kilometer (0.6 miles) from town on the road from Waldenburg (Walbrych), just between the road and the railroad track and river, in the shadow of a small mountain. Four wooden barracks were prepared for prisoners. Three of them were for living quarters, and the fourth one held the camp kitchen, warehouse, and infirmary. The living quarters barracks were furnished with three-tiered bunks. The assembly ground was in the center of the camp. The entire camp was surrounded by an electrified barbed-wire fence, and at the camp entrance and the fence corners, there were watchtowers equipped with machine guns. A staff barracks stood outside the barbed-wire fence across from the camp entrance.\(^2\)

The camp began operating on September 8, 1944, when the first transport of prisoners arrived from Auschwitz.\(^3\) It comprised 300 Polish Jews from the Łódź (German: Litzmannstadt) ghetto, which was being liquidated. They stayed at Auschwitz for a month “on hold”; they did not receive numbers, since they were allocated to be transported to another camp right away. There was a search for specialists at Auschwitz to fill the transport to Friedland: electricians and metalworkers;\(^4\) therefore, everyone on the transport list is recorded as an expert tradesman (or skilled worker, in the worst instance). The prisoners came to Friedland without of accounts by former prisoners, as well as information about prisoner numbering. These materials are located in the AMGR.

Aleksandra Kabielec
trans. Gerard Majka

FRIEDLAND IN SCHLESIEN

Freiburg in Schlesien (later Swiebodzice), a women’s Gross-Rosen subcamp, was probably formed in August of 1944, as the first references to a transport of female prisoners from Auschwitz concentration camp come from that time.\(^1\) The transport numbered 1,000 women; 500 were Jewish women who had lived in the Łódź ghetto prior to being incarcerated. The next known transport sent to this subcamp was on January 12, 1945. It numbered 150 women brought to Freiburg from the Ravensbrück concentration camp. They received numbers 94001 through 94150.\(^2\) After a brief stay in Freiburg, they were transported to Ludwigsdorf, another Gross-Rosen subcamp.

The prisoners at Freiburg were put to work manufacturing ammunition at the Hildebrand und Frey factory and making aircraft lighting parts at the Allgemeine Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft (AEG) plant. AEG occupied space for this purpose in the Hermann Teichgräber company spinning mill.

Work at the factory lasted from 6:30 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. There was a half-hour lunch break. Although conditions at the factory were tolerable, intense hunger was rife in the camp. In addition, the prisoners were persecuted by the barracks chiefs Marysia (from Łódź) and Olga.

The camp was evacuated in March or April 1945. The prisoners were escorted to the railway station and put into uncovered cars without receiving provisions for the trip. After traveling for eight days, they were ordered to move into closed cattle cars; they reached the Mauthausen concentration camp in another eight days.

SOURCES

Available archival source material is composed primarily


\(^3\) Available archival source material is composed primarily

going through the main camp, which was atypical for transports of male prisoners, and received numbers 56301 through 56600.

The next transport there on October 13, 1944, and included 50 Slovak Jews, who received numbers 67301 through 67350. It also included expert tradesmen, but in another field. They were cabinetmakers, carpenters, and woodworkiers, but as many as 22 of them had no trade (they were listed as laborers, *Hilfarbeiter*).

The last transport from outside the Gross-Rosen complex arrived at Friedland several days later on October 19, 1944. A total of 165 prisoners arrived from Auschwitz, of which 133 had previously been at Theresienstadt, and at Friedland they received Gross-Rosen numbers ranging from 73801 to 73933; 11 from the Łódź ghetto received numbers 73934 through 73944; 18 Slovak Jews were identified with numbers 73945 through 73962; and 3 Hungarian Jews received numbers 73963 through 73965. Here, as in the first transport, expert tradesmen—metalworkers—predominated, but there were also three doctors.

The prisoner population remained basically unchanged until late 1944. Of the 515 prisoners who had come in the three transports described above, 310 were in camp on December 6. Earlier, two doctors were moved to another subsidiary of the Gross-Rosen complex, the labor camp at Bad Warmbrunn (later Gieplice, a section of Jelenia Góra, which had been called Hirschberg until 1945).

The largest number of prisoners, numbering as many as 434, worked at the Vereinigte Deutsche Metallwerke (VDM), Hamburg aircraft propeller factory. Prisoners were put to work directly in production, and their work consisted of shaping aircraft propellers with special tools (milling machines) with a tolerance of up to 1/100 millimeters. Even though only expert tradesmen were selected at Auschwitz, the Germans were concerned about the quality of production and devoted four to six weeks of job training at the factory. Upon completion of training, the prisoners began normal work at the factory. They worked on two 12-hour shifts.

Some 40 prisoners worked at the Fritz Schuber carpentry company; 21 worked in camp services. The work at the carpentry company and at VDM, although it was hard and the prisoners were exposed to persecution by the civilian foremen, provided a sense of protection against the approaching winter, at least as far as the cold was concerned. Prisoners assigned to work at construction sites (*Stollenbau*) had it the worst, as they carved caves into the nearby mountain for a purpose that was not fully explained (there was a rumor circulating among the prisoners that a factory was going to be located there). Equally hard and dangerous was the work on the railroad trackway, laying rails and ties. In the winter, the fingers of the emaciated and exhausted prisoners would freeze to the rails and cause serious mutilations.

The prisoners assigned to camp services had it the best, relatively speaking. Working in the kitchen or cleaning the SS men’s spaces provided at least some slim chances of getting extra food, since the camp’s greatest problem was the hunger prevailing there from the very beginning. The 85 to 99 grams (3.0 to 3.5 ounces) of bread and two daily issues of turnip water called soup were not enough for anyone, let alone people who had to perform hard physical labor 12 hours a day. The situation did not improve when a herb detachment (*Kräuterkommando*) was formed to collect herbs in the forest to enrich this diet.

The situation got even worse in 1945 when the next prisoner transport arrived at camp. It included at least 68 starving prisoners from the evacuation column from a Gross-Rosen subcamp that was part of the separate Riese complex the Wolfshberg (Polish: Góra Włodarz) subcamp. The camp commander refused to admit the entire evacuation transport. Those he did admit were placed in Barrack 4. Their arrival caused the already extraordinarily meager food rations to decrease.

The prisoners’ initial relief at leaving the shadow of Birkenau’s crematoriums and gas chambers quickly changed to despair. At the Friedland concentration camp, the exceedingly hard labor killed with equal effectiveness, as did the starvation and ever-present lice infestation, with which no one even attempted to fight, despite the bathhouses at camp (but only with cold water) and numerous disinfections. Deceased prisoners were buried on the hill near the local Catholic cemetery.

Although the Friedland camp escaped the tragedy of evacuation, toward its end, headquarters had begun preparing for evacuation, as other camps were. On April 14 and 21, two transports of sick prisoners were sent away to the Dörnhau (Polish: Kolce) camp, which was the “hospital” for the Riese complex camps operating in the Eulengebirge (Polish: Góry Sowie). There was an evacuation attempt in early May, and some prisoners were escorted out of the camp, but due to the commencement of the 1st Ukrainian Front’s “Operation Prague” on May 7, the evacuation column was returned to camp after spending the night in the forest.

The Friedland camp was one of the last camps liberated, as the Soviet Army entered it only on May 9.

No German records on the camp’s staff have survived. An inquiry conducted by the Commission Archives-Polish Institute of National Memory, Wroclaw (AK-IPN WR) in the 1970s with regard to the commanders of the Gross-Rosen camp produced no results and ended in the proceedings being discontinued. Out of the Friedland labor camp’s staff throughout its operation, the name of only one SS man has been established. That was SS-Rottenführer Hofer, who served as medic (SDG). According to former prisoner accounts, the camp’s leader (Lagerführer) was a Silesian, a Wehrmacht captain named Kautz. The entire staff numbered from 20 to 30 SS men. None of them were tried in court after the war.

To help maintain discipline in camp, the SS men had what was called the “prisoner government.” It was headed by the camp elder (Lagerältester), who was initially the Polish Jew Israel Herskon and later the Slovak Goldner. The barrack chiefs were Henryk Judkiewicz, Leib Ohrer, and...
Majloch Rachoner. The head cook was the Austrian Max. At the infirmary (Revier), Franz Vetelički16 and Karl Zimmer served as doctors, while Leopold Winter was the camp dentist.17

SOURCES Information on the Friedland camp may be found in Roman Olszyna, “KL Friedland,” F-S 47 (1978); and in the published memoir by Henry Starer, Why (New York, 1991).

Archival records are held in AMGR; see, for example, Catalog No. 146/DS 5/68-2/ MF—testimony of female forced laborer from Friedland; Catalog No. 6928/DP; 108/9/ MF—Transportliste über die am 8.9.44 vom K.L. Auschwitz nach K.L. Gross-Rosen, A.L.Friedland überstellten 300 jüdische Häftlinge, September 8, 1944, Friedland (original at APMO); Catalog No. 6931/DP—Berufsliste der im A.L.Friedland eingesetzten 510 jüdischen männlichen Häftlinge, December 6, 1944, A.L.Friedland (original at APMO).

Aleksandra Kobielic
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES
2. AMGR, Catalog No. 3669/DP-A —account of Henryk Marecki.
5. All transports sent to Friedland labor camp were sent there directly and did not go through quarantine at the main camp.
9. AMGR, Catalog No. 2330/DP.
11. AMGR, Catalog No. 6266/DP—Zugansliste Riese von Friedland,” reconstructed by Prof. Alfred Konieczny based on the collections of the America Joint Distribution Committee in Prague.
12. Tape-recorded account of Dawid Szajnzych in the collections of the Gross-Rosen Museum.
15. Health services SS man in charge of hospital [Revier].

FÜNFTEICHEN The creation of a Gross-Rosen subcamp in Fünfteichen (later Miłoszyce) near Breslau (Wrocław) was closely connected to the decision to build another armaments plant for the Maschinenfabriken Friedrich Krupp Berthawerk AG at that location. Construction of the Krupp factory buildings began in early 1942 and production commenced by early 1943.

The construction and production schedules assumed that employment at the plant would exceed 20,000 by the end of 1944. Plant management learned on July 1, 1943, however, that such numbers would not be available through normal channels; they therefore undertook negotiations with Gross-Rosen to use prisoners.

Consequent to the resulting agreement, Gross-Rosen took over a camp approximately 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) from the plant. The construction work to finish and adapt the site was done in August and September 1943, with a workforce that included prisoners from the nearby camp in Markstädt (later Laskowice Oławskie, now part of Jelcz-Laskowice). The newly created Fünfteichen camp received its first large prisoner transport in late September or early October 1943: a transport of approximately 600 Polish Jews from Auschwitz. More prisoner transports arrived at the camp in subsequent months. There were 1,200 prisoners in the camp on February 2, 1944, though it could already hold 4,000 to 5,000 men. Prisoner accounts tell us that between 6,000 and 7,000 prisoners were in the camp near the end of its existence. It was the largest subcamp in the Gross-Rosen system.

The structure of Fünfteichen’s prisoner population changed during 1944. Initially Jews constituted the majority. However, starting with the second quarter of 1944, many transports of Poles from prisons all over Poland began arriving via Gross-Rosen. These included approximately 200 men who had been sent to Gross-Rosen after the failure of the Warsaw Uprising. Records indicate that transports of Jewish prisoners also were leaving the camp. For example, in August 1944, 314 emaciated prisoners were sent back to Auschwitz, while 403 were transferred to the Gross-Rosen subcamp at Görlitz. Although a transport of approximately 500 Hungarian Jews arrived from Auschwitz in late May or early June, the number of Jewish prisoners decreased appreciably in late 1944. Poles began constituting the clear majority. There were also, though less numerous, French, Belgian, Dutch, Russian, German, Czech, and Croatian prisoners.

When the expansion was completed, the camp consisted of several dozen barracks: 32 one-story wooden barracks set directly on the ground for the prisoners; 5 barracks served as
lavatories and bathrooms, and 5 brick ones as the hospital. To
the north of the assembly ground were the buildings of the
Schreibstube, the camp canteen, and kitchen. A double barbed-
wire fence surrounded the entire camp. Beyond the fence
were 2 barracks for the SS and the headquarters building.
Also on the outside were concrete bunkers spaced every 20 to
30 meters (66 to 98 feet) and several watchtowers. Electric
current ran through the inner fence.

Most of the prisoners worked for the Krupp factory, in two
12-hour shifts, manufacturing 75mm and 150mm cannons as
well as torpedo launchers. The prisoners made the approxi-
mately 3-kilometer (1.9-mile) trip from the camp to the plant
on foot via a dirt road lined with barbed-wire entanglements
on both sides. The SS men escorting the prisoners had dogs
and walked outside the fencing on both sides.

The testimony of former prisoners leaves no doubt that
the mortality rate was high. However, the figures are only
estimates which preclude providing an exact death count for
the entire time the camp was in existence. The estimates
range from 30 deaths per week to 100 or even 200. If even the
lowest of those figures were accurate, it would add up to over
2,000 deaths over the roughly 16 months of the camp’s exis-
tence.

Initial plans called for a staff of approximately 60 to 100 SS
guards, but by late 1944, there were between 400 and 500.
The first Lagerführer (camp leader) was an SS man named
Weiss; in the spring of 1944, SS-Sturmbannführer Otto
Stoppel (born September 13, 1902) took over, and his assistant
was SS-Hauptscharführer Erich Schrammel (born August
26, 1908). The first roll-call leader (Rapportführer) was SS-
Oberscharführer Wilhelm Siebold, followed (in October
1944) by SS-Hauptscharführer Karl Gallasch.

Attempts to escape from Fünfteichen occurred quite of-
ten, more frequently from the factory than from the camp it-
self. Escapes from the factory mainly occurred on the night
shift or in the evening, when the day-shift prisoners were
finishing work. People also took advantage of situations when
an air-raid alarm was announced, because then the lights in
and around the factory were shut off, and the chance for suc-
cess increased. Many successful attempts took advantage of
the rail lines that ran by the factory.

Prisoners shot while attempting to escape were displayed
on the assembly ground as a warning to others. There would
be a sign on the prisoner’s chest, with the derisive words: “Ich
bin wieder da” (I am back again) or “Ich bin von Reise zurück”
(I am back from my trip). Anyone who was caught and brought
to camp alive also stood on the assembly ground with a simi-
lar sign. The punishment for attempting to escape was usu-
ally death, most frequently by hanging. Executions were
conducted either on the spot at the subcamp or at the main
camp. Sometimes the escapee was only whipped and assigned
to a penal company.

Prisoner beatings by SS men were a daily occurrence,
mainly in camp but during work as well. Any prisoner who
left his workstation without permission, talked to a fellow
prisoner, or got tired and sat down for a moment was beaten,
but it also happened very often for no evident reason. Some
beatings were fatal.

Many prisoners could not stand the conditions prevailing
in camp and committed suicide. The most frequent form of
suicide in the camp was called “going to the post,” meaning
getting near the fence that a guard would open fire. At the
factory, instances of suicide by hanging occurred. All you
had to do was put a wire noose around your neck, hook it onto
an overhead crane, and press the button that pulled the hook up
to the factory ceiling.

The evacuation of Fünfteichen started on January 21, 1945.
Approximately 6,000 prisoners were marched out of the camp,
surrounded by SS men. In temperatures reaching -20°C
(-4°F), usually by dirt roads, the prisoners journeyed on foot
to Gross-Rosen, which they reached in four days. Approxi-
mately 1,000 prisoners died en route. The prisoners stayed at
the main camp for a few days, then were assigned to various
evacuation trains into the Reich. Those who survived that
time finally wound up at the concentration camps in
Buchenwald, Flossenbürg, Dachau, Mittelbau, and primarily
Mauthausen.

However, not all the prisoners left with the death march.
Approximately 300 sick prisoners remained in the camp hos-
pital, without medical care or food; many of them did not live
until liberation. The prisoners who died during that time
were buried in a mass grave near the camp.

The staff left the camp along with the evacuation and were
replaced by the German Home Guard (Volkssturm). After
two days, on January 23, 1945, they too left the camp. At ap-
proximately 11:00 A.M. that day, Soviet Army soldiers entered
the camp, probably a detachment of the 52nd Army’s 78th
Rifle Corps. A number of lynchings occurred at that time, as
prisoners took revenge against some of their fellows.

The following members of the SS staff at Fünfteichen
were tried after the war: SS-Hauptscharführer Gallasch
(born November 17, 1897), who served as Rapportführer, was
sentenced to death on September 12, 1947. The sentence was
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sentenced to death by a decree of the Wrocław District
Court, dated May 17, 1947; he committed suicide in prison
on May 18. Camp guard Jacob Morhardt (born March 23,
1899) was tried by the Świdnica District Court and was sen-
tenced to death on September 12, 1947. The sentence was
carried out on November 8.

**Sources** There is no monograph on the Fünfteichen sub-
camp. Information on this subcamp can be found in Tadeusz
Dumin, “The Gross-Rosen Concentration Camp Subsidiary
in Miłoszyce in Oława County,” SFiZH 2 (1975); and Andrzej
Bułat and Waclaw Dominik, _Aż stali się prochem i rozpaczą_ (Wroclaw, 1980). Also, Waclaw Kolenda, _Wspomnienia_ [mem-
ors] (Wroclaw, 1984), published by the author, is helpful.

Archival material on the Fünfteichen camp is primarily
located at the AMGR in Wałbrzych. It is chiefly composed of
former prisoner accounts and recollections. On file at the AK-
IPN, Warsaw and Wroclaw divisions, are reports on exami-
nations of witnesses and former Fünfteichen prisoners, as well
as partial trial records for some of the SS staff members and
prisoner-functionaries tried after the war. The AZIH in

ENCyclopedia of CAMPS and GHETTOS, 1933–1945
Warsaw and YV in Jerusalem also have accounts of prisoners from the Markstädt and Fünfteichen camps. The information on the Krupp Works and its association with the Fünfteichen labor camp is in the Records of Nuremberg Trial No. 10 against Alfred Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach and codefendants before an American Military Tribunal (vols. 42, 63, 95, 99–102). There is a microfilm of the records kept at the AK-IPN in Warsaw and AMGR.

**NOTES**

1. Testimony of T. Soll, AK-IPN WR; Testimony of K. Koniprowski, AK-IPN; Testimony of S. Reifel, AZ. IH.
7. Ibid., Item 1055.

**GABERSDORF**

The original camp for female Jewish prisoners in Gabersdorf (later Libec) was established in January 1941 as part of the network of forced labor camps (ZAL) for Jews under the auspices of the Organisation Schmetl. Apparently, the first wooden barrack was built around that time; the second, later. The female prisoners had to work in a spinning mill that had been “aryanized” in 1939 by the Viennese firm Vereinigte Textilwerke & Co. K.H. Barthel. Later, the prisoners would work also in the factories of the firms Aloys Haase and J.A. Kluge und Etrich, as well as in a cotton-spinning mill and for a manufacturer of tents.

On March 18, 1944, the transformation into a subcamp of Gross-Rosen was completed. Later on the camp was put under the control of the “SS-Kommando Trautenau, Parschnitz.” The camp held mostly Jewish girls and women between 15 and 30 (220 of the 363 women in the camp on October 27, 1944, were in this age group). There were 343 Polish women, 18 Hungarians, 1 Czech, and 1 Slovak. According to a report by the Gross-Rosen command office to K.H. Frank on November 18, 1944, there were 400 prisoners in the camp.

The food was, as in other camps in the area, monotonous, inadequate, and often tasteless, typically a soup made from rutabagas. In the course of the war, prisoner rations became worse both in quality and quantity (e.g., the prisoner’s daily bread ration dropped to 220 grams [7.8 ounces] per day). The results were illnesses, a complete lack of vitamins, and total physical weakness while doing heavy work. The death of two women in the camp has been confirmed.

Under the charge of camp commander Charlotte Rose were 10 SS wardresses and 3 male SS guards. The camp was liberated by Soviet troops on May 9, 1945.

**SOURCES**


Well-known professor of German studies Ludvík Václavek has devoted his attention to a specifi c topic, a play that originated in the Schatzlar camp among Jewish women from Hungary: “Lágri je sen! (Literární dokument z koncentraèního táboru právě za òolštinského praðelného roku 1945),” in Stati o nemecké literature v Czech zemích (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 1991).

Basic sources and transport lists of prisoners from the Gross-Rosen subcamps in northeast Bohemia are located in the SÚA in Prague, with copies in the AG-T. The most important are the fi les of the Special People’s Court in Jičín 1945–1946 (criminal trials against the former wardresses). Finally, there is the firm’s archive at Texlen Trutnov; in the 1970s, its former head Vladimír Wolf made accessible to Miroslav Kryl and Ludmila Chládková the most important sources on the camps in the Trautenau area contained in the fi les of the German textile firm for the years 1940 to 1945. Nevertheless, the sources are inadequate.

Miroslav Kryl
trans. Stephen Pallavicini

**GABLONZ**

A subcamp of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp was formed in the town of Gablonz an der Neisse (Jablonec nad Nisou) in November 1944. The initial transport numbered 500 prisoners. A large percentage was composed of prisoners who wound up at the main camp after the Warsaw Uprising. The camp was set up at a former factory production hall near the Feinapparatenbau Carl Zeiss Jena Niederlassung factory. Prisoners were put in the upper level, while the camp staff lived on the lower one; there was also business space. Two buildings adjoined the camp. Prisoners of war (POWs) lived in one, and women, mostly Jewish, in the other. Otto Saenger held the job of commandant (Lagerführer). The staff was made up of 31 people.

Most of the prisoners were sent to work at the factory, where they worked in two 12-hour shifts. They worked machining aircraft parts and manufacturing parts for weapons.
A former prisoner writes about working at the factory in his memoirs:

I was assigned to the Dreherei II department, composed of thirty automatic lathes and two precision lathes for turning out small amounts of small parts for machinery. The automatic lathes were operated exclusively by teenage boys from the Warsaw Uprising. They were braver than some adults, which won them terrific liking and respect. The department supervisor was a civilian German engineer, who rarely looked in on us, but the department was actually supervised by a civilian foreman, a sixty-year-old Bavarian. On the third day he told me that there was a slice of bread with lard in his desk drawer. When he walked away, I was to steal it and eat it quickly. He was afraid of being responsible for giving a prisoner extra food and that’s why he told me to steal it. He did that every day, until he was transferred to another production hall. Upon my request, he would even leave his Stadtenzeitung newspaper in the drawer, in consequence of which I was a source of information on what was going on in the war for other prisoners. Our foreman was so good to me that he didn’t even require that I fulfill the work quota.\(^3\)

Prisoners Henryk Uchman and Władysław Motyl attempted to organize a sabotage group. They gradually initiated the more trusted prisoners, such as boy scouts. The sabotage consisted of destroying materials and ruining castings.

Roadway commandos called Brandelkommandos were also organized at the camp; they were assigned to build and repair the railroad tracks near the Gablonz train station. Prisoners from the commando were used also to unload railroad cars.

The group of teenagers also was helped in the kitchen, where they did such things as peel potatoes and rutabagas. Sometimes they managed to take out slices of rutabaga, which they often shared with their friends. Anyone caught smuggling like that was punished, usually by beating.

Ulcers, erysipelas, tuberculosis, and diarrhea were the most frequent diseases at Gablonz. A typhus epidemic broke out at camp due to the lack of elementary hygiene, causing many deaths.

Former prisoners’ accounts indicate that the SS army doctor performed selections and killed the gravely ill with injections. After such an injection, the patient would die in six minutes. The injections were administered to people who required longer periods of treatment and were suspected of having tuberculosis.

Delousing was a nightmare for the prisoners. Washing their clothes in cold water without soap every week did not solve the problem. One day the camp officials announced there would be lice catching. Prisoners received a cigarette for catching two lice. Nonsmoking prisoners gave the lice they caught to their smoker friends. There were so many lice that the cigarettes quickly ran out. The prisoners who had collected the greatest “harvests” were regarded as slovens and lice breeders. In consequence, they were ordered to “leapfrog,” and the prisoner-functionaries exacted their penalty upon them with bats. The mangled prisoners were driven into the bathhouse, where they were “treated” to an icy shower. Many came down with pneumonia. Many prisoners died due to their wounds and emaciation.

There were two unsuccessful escape attempts at Gablonz subcamp. In the wintertime during the night shift at the factory, two prisoners escaped: a Russian and a Croatian. After an investigation had been conducted, the Blockführer (block leader) ordered that the punishment of 100 lashes be administered to the prisoners suspected of helping organize the escape. In a few days the fugitives were caught, beaten mercilessly, and dressed in paper clothes; a sign was put on them reading “wir sind wieder da” (we are back here again). They were finally taken away to the main camp, where they were probably hanged. The third escapee was a Russian who worked in the roadway commando. He too was caught, but he was not taken away to the main camp. He was beaten, his hands were twisted behind his back and tied, and he was hung from a rafter by his arm joints. That’s how he spent a few hours.

Evacuation transports passed through the camp beginning in January 1945. In January, a 60-person group of prisoners arrived from Bautzen, another Gross-Rosen subcamp. They were sent to Buchenwald by foot march. On January 15, 15 prisoners reached the camp from Auschwitz concentration camp; they were moved to Sachsenhausen concentration camp in February. In January or early February, a transport of 80 to 100 prisoners also arrived from Auschwitz. In early 1945, approximately 200 to 300 Jewish women arrived from Zillerthal-Erdmannsdorf, a Gross-Rosen subcamp. They were accommodated across from the men’s camp. This is how one prisoner recalls the event: “The SS men prepared a drastic experience for us one Sunday. They brought about three hundred Jewish women from some nearby commando and ordered them to strip naked in our presence. They were sent in batches of fifty to wash in our washroom, where the hot water had been turned on for once. These SS men brought in an accordion and ordered Cz. Matuszewski . . . to play rapturous tangos and waltzes.”\(^4\)

In March, approximately 30 prisoners detached from the evacuation column from the Hartmannsdorf subcamp arrived at Gablonz. About 100 prisoners were sent to the nearby Reichenau subcamp in early February. In late February or early March a new camp elder (Lagerältester) and block elder (Blockältester) as well as a dozen or so Jewish prisoners arrived at Gablonz from the closed Hirschberg camp. They brought equipment and provisions with them, as well as new terrifying regimens. Lagerführer Saenger was probably recalled just at this time, too, and a new commander arrived to take his place.
Only one shift remained working at the factory in April 1945. The remaining prisoners who had worked at the factory earlier were assigned to work repairing railroad tracks. The prisoners worked until May 7. In the early morning of May 8, evacuation of the camp was ordered. All the prisoners except the sick were led out of the camp under the escort of guards. Several of the stronger prisoners pulled a cart with bread. A group of female Jewish prisoners joined the column along the way. They were going toward Tannwald (Tanvald). The SS men unexpectedly surrendered the column to some Czech underground fighters and Red Cross representatives.

**SOURCES** The most recent research on selected Gross-Rosen subsidiaries, and the basis of this entry, is Dorota Sula’s study Filie KL Gross-Rosen (wybór artykułów) (Wałbrzych, 2001); the Gablonz subcamp is discussed on pp. 147–160. Additional information can be found in Bogdan Cyбуlski, Obozy podporządkowane KL Gross-Rosen (stan badan) (Rogoźnica, 1987).

Archival materials on the Gablonz camp consist of numerous surveys, recollections, and accounts of former prisoners of Gablonz, which can be found at AMGR.

Dorota Sula

**NOTES**

2. Ibid., p. 237

**GASSEN**

This subcamp of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp was set up approximately 1 kilometer (0.6 miles) northeast of the town of Gassen (later Jasien) on the site of a former camp for prisoners of war (POWs) or for forced laborers. The initial transport of 100 to 200 prisoners arrived in late September or early October 1944. Prisoners who wound up at Gross-Rosen after the Warsaw Uprising, formed a large part of the transport. The camp’s population was about 700 prisoners. Besides Poles, the most numerous group (56 percent), there were Soviet citizens (27 percent), Frenchmen (6.7 percent), Croats (3.5 percent), Czechs (1.4 percent), and even a few Italians and Belgians at Gassen. Nearly 70 percent of the inmates were under 33 years old; younger people could produce more. The subcamp commander was SS-Hauptscharführer Walter Knop, who joined the SS on April 15, 1935, and the Nazi Party on May 1, 1937. From October 1, 1938, to May 8, 1944, he served at the Sachsenhausen and Neuengamme concentration camps, after which he was transferred to Gross-Rosen. The German criminal Peter Klein was the camp elder (Lagerältester).

The majority of the prisoners were put to work at Focke-Wulf, a former farm-machinery factory that had been converted to manufacture aircraft parts; so mostly prisoners who were knowledgeable about metalworking were sent to this subcamp. The prisoners worked in two 12-hour shifts, with a break for lunch, which they ate on the spot.

There was a large group of teenage prisoners between 15 and 17 years old at the subcamp. They lived in a separate room. A monthlong course to learn the metalworking trade was held for them. Their teachers were foremen from the factory, who “treated” them to a mug of milk soup. After the course, they were sent to work at the factory, while on Sundays they were assigned to clean the aviator quarters near the camp. Sometimes they would get something to eat there. The teenage prisoners were exposed to the designs of Lagerältester Klein, who had a weakness for boys.

The diseases that plagued the prisoners most often included scabies, diarrhea, tuberculosis, and dysentery. Lice were another plague for the prisoners. There were delousing campaigns, which consisted of the prisoners handing over their things for disinfection outside of camp. While their things were being disinfected, the naked prisoners stayed in their quarters and, on one occasion, did not even go to work for 3 days. However, due to the lack of elementary hygiene, delousing was ineffective. Once every 10 days the prisoners were taken to the bathhouse about 180 meters (197 yards) from camp. Bathing occurred in cold water without soap and towels, and many prisoners paid for it with their lives. According to prisoners, the death rate at the camp was high.

Escape was the only salvation, so many prisoners attempted to escape. Two attempts in particular have stuck in the minds of former prisoners. Two Yugoslavians attempted to escape, probably in December 1944. They were caught, and signs were hung on them reading: “Von der Reise zurück, ich bin wieder da” (Back from my trip, I am here again). They marched about the assembly ground, banging spoons against eating bowls. Naturally, they were beaten, but their ultimate fate is unknown. Also in December, a Lithuanian prisoner attempted to escape while returning from the factory. The prisoner did not know his name, but they knew he was Lithuania’s vice-champion or champion in boxing. After he was caught, Lagerältester Klein abused him in front of the prisoners in such a cruel and elaborate manner that the prisoner died of his injuries.

Prisoners were sent to the main camp for major offenses. Two former Soviet POWs were transported to “headquarters” from Gassen. They were shot on December 16, 1944, by order of the commander of the Breslau (Wrocław) Security Police.

Preparations to evacuate the camp were begun by disassembling the factory machines and equipment, which the prisoners then loaded onto railroad cars. The disassembled factory was taken into Germany. While packing mallets for hammering sheet metal, one of the prisoners, as Stefan Pala recalls, “came upon the idea that the mallet heads were edible. They were made of leather saturated with a hard resin substance. When the mallet was placed on the hot metal of a furnace [stove], the head unraveled and fried like the skin on pork fat. That’s how we ate many mallets.”
The prisoners did not work for three days before the evacuation; they stayed in the barracks under orders not to leave them. According to a former prisoner, an announcement was made a few days prior to the evacuation, saying that anyone weak or unable to march was to report for transport by train. Unfortunately, we do not know when the sick prisoners left the subcamp. A transport of 55 prisoners (1 of 3 prisoners had died of emaciation on the way) was admitted to Buchenwald concentration camp on February 23, 1945. The prisoners were put in the camp hospital, where they stayed until liberation. In all likelihood, few survived.

The evacuation took place on February 12. The prisoners set out from the subcamp in the morning hours, arranged in fives. The winter was extremely cold, the snow knee-high; movement was difficult. The prisoners had not gotten far when the column was halted, and some of the SS men went back to the subcamp, where they set fire to the barracks. The SS men returned an hour later, and the column resumed its journey. The prisoners were sure that the people who had stayed in the camp hospital had been murdered. They carried that idea with them for many years after the war, as they did not know that the sick people had also been evacuated. The emaciated and weak prisoners quickly lost their strength due to the exhausting march. Sick prisoners were told to report during a stop as early as the first day. Those who responded to the order, and there were about 10 to 15 of them, were shot by the SS men. Over subsequent days of the march, anyone who did not keep up with the column was murdered with a shot in the back of the head.

After several days of marching, a stop was ordered in the vicinity of Spremberg or Weissswasser in Lusatia, lasting two days. The prisoners, losing their strength, were quartered in farm buildings. A dead horse was found near the buildings. The Lagerführer ordered that it be cooked and distributed among the prisoners. Some of the prisoners also ate the entrails, which had already been buried; it was not long until the effects were evident. Many prisoners became ill, and many died. After that stop, the prisoners were loaded into freight cars. Two days later, on February 23, 1945, the transport arrived in Leipzig. From the train station, the prisoners had to walk to the Leipzig-Thekla subcamp of Buchenwald. Many prisoners were unable to get out of the train on their own, and 5 died along the way. More prisoners died due to extreme exhaustion and disease; 20 prisoners died between February 25 and March 4. The transport of 580 prisoners (including the dead) was officially admitted in the records of Buchenwald concentration camp on March 5, 1945.

A court in Cologne sentenced Walter Knop to nine years’ incarceration in 1979.

**Sources**

The most recent research on selected Gross-Rosen subsidiaries, and the basis of this entry, is Dorota Sula’s study *Dzieje KL Gross-Rosen (wybór artykułów)* (Walbrzych, 2001). The Gassen subcamp is discussed on pp. 42–65. Additional information can be found in Bogdan Cybulski, *Obce podporządkowane KL Gross-Rosen (stan badań)* (Rogoźnica, 1987); and Alfred Konieczny, *Ewakuacja podobozu KL Gross-Rosen w Jasieniu /luty—kwiecień 1945 roku,* in *Wpływ pobytu w KL Gross-Rosen na stan zdrowia i losy byłych więźniów* (Walbrzych, 1986).

Archival materials on the Gassen subcamp include reports of witness interviews conducted by the GOKBZHWp (the originals are in the archives of the IPN), former prisoner accounts, and surveys on file in the collections of the AMGR.

**Note**

1. AMGR, sygn.5758/509/DP/2, Stefan Pala, Relacja z komenda Gassen (X 1944-18 II 1945).

### GEBHARDSDORF [aka FRIEDEBERG]

The Gross-Rosen subcamp in Gebhardsdorf (later Giebułtów), also known as the Friedeberg subcamp after the nearby settlement by that name, was probably established in September 1944. Whether the camp was created on the basis of a preexisting forced labor camp belonging to the Organisation Schmelt has not been verified.

The female Polish Jew Johanna (Joanne) B. reported on a transport from Auschwitz on November 19, 1944, initially by truck and then on foot to Gebhardsdorf, which lasted several days and nights: “Not everybody arrived; many, very many died on the way. With cold hands we dug shallow graves and covered the bodies with a little earth. . . . We arrived in Gebhardsdorf at night. There was an open square, further selections were conducted, and what didn’t please the SS-men, was immediately . . . thrown onto trucks and taken to Gross-Rosen. They were killed there. . . . My sister and I and all the other Hungarian and Polish (Jewish) women remained in Gebhardsdorf.”

In the camp at this time there were already 300 female Hungarian Jews, a fact that does not support the assumption of the Gebhardsdorf camp previously having belonged to the Organisation Schmelt forced labor camps for Jews (ZALfJ) in Slesia.

There is also no clarity with regard to the question of the registration numbers given to the women by the main camp in Gross-Rosen. They probably lie within the Gross-Rosen registration number series 79501 to 80450, 80601 to 80700, and 83201 to 84300.

The subcamp was located on an elevation. Former female prisoner Hadessa H. reported on the living quarters and hygienic conditions as follows:

We lived in rooms, which had cupboards, clean containers, washrooms. The living quarters were clean. The women slept on the floor, covered with a blanket. In the camp there was only cold water, underwear could not be changed, very little soap (one piece per month), and so the initial delight slowly turned to disappointment. Washing clothes was
strictly forbidden, but cleanliness had to be observed. The prisoners worked during the day, at night—they did their washing, which to a considerable degree exhausted the strength of the women.

They worked in shifts both day and night. On Sunday, sleep after the night shift was not permitted, as this day of rest was designated for general cleaning up. In the camp there were two barracks: in the first lived the Hungarian women, in the second the Polish women. In each room lived forty women. Within the compound there was also a two-story building. On the first floor there were living quarters, a refectory, two washrooms; the quarters were of medium size, here the prisoners also slept on the floor. On the second floor, there were three living quarters, an infirmary, two washrooms.

Since the barrack roofs were leaking and water trickled in, the straw and blankets became damp, which led to prisoners getting sick primarily because of the cold temperatures. Only those with a high fever were admitted to the sickroom. The sick women were treated badly there. The sickroom was under the direction of a female Jew from Holland who suffered from mental disturbances. The woman in charge of the camp, however, thought that she was only pretending and poured cold water on her when it was frosty, which led to her death.

Work deployment was at the aircraft factory Aerobau, which had been established in the workshops of the Merveld Company. Johanna B. writes that the route to the factory was a long path through small woods, on which they never encountered any other people.

German craftsmen trained the women. They behaved correctly toward the female prisoners, sometimes even helping them. Since lunch was served in the factory canteen, together with civilian foreign forced laborers and the German workers, at least in this respect the women were not treated too harshly. The bread rations, however, were reduced to such an extent that one bread loaf was divided initially among four, later among seven, women.

The above-mentioned Johanna B. writes of the SS personnel: “The SS guards were from Romania, [ethnic Germans] from Siebenbürgen. There were no gas chambers in Gebhardsdorf, but there were sufficient murderers among the SS guards and female SS supervisors [Aufseherinnen]. That I remained alive is mainly due to my good command of the German language.”

Above all, it was the female camp leader who tormented and beat the women. Other female SS guards also harassed the women, by preventing them from going to the toilets or by surprise checks at night, during which they beat without pity those women who were guilty of minor infractions of the rules. The leader in particular was a fanatic, even by SS standards, who was brutal toward the prisoners but also impatient toward the female SS guards subordinated to her. She complained to the commandant of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp about several of her female SS guards for “breaches of their duties.”

On January 18, 1945, the subcamp was evacuated in a march of about 30 kilometers (19 miles) to St. Georgenthal (Jiřetín, now Jiřetín pod Jedlovou). On the second stage of the evacuation, the Gross-Rosen Nebenlager subcamp of Kratzau (Chrastava) was reached. Several women collapsed there from exhaustion during the parade. Nevertheless, after staying the night, the march was continued.

Johanna B. writes about this march: “Roughly in January 1945 we hiked again for seven days and seven nights to St. Georgenthal. We were harnessed to carts heavily laden with weapons, eight women to each just like horses, and had to pull them. Many of our women collapsed and died on the way tied to the carts heavily laden with arms. This did not disturb the SS escorts. As soon as we had buried the dead, other prisoners, including my sister and I, were harnessed up, and we dragged these carts further until we arrived in St. Georgenthal.”

Here, further selections took place. Some women were removed, probably to a camp for the sick, possibly in Zittau.

According to a report sent by the commandant of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp, Hassebroek, on November 18, 1944, to the Higher-SS and Police Leader (HSSPF) in Prague, Karl Hermann Frank, at this time there was already a women’s camp with 50 prisoners in St. Georgenthal. The women that arrived from Gebhardsdorf, like the prison detachment already stationed there, had to work in the Sicht- und Zerlegewerk GmbH, dismantling damaged and destroyed aircraft. The workplace was located in the factory facilities of the Rott Company in Warnsdorf (Varnsdorf).

Since there was also a camp for male prisoners in St. Georgenthal subordinated to the Flossenbürg concentration camp, the women’s camp was designated as St. Georgenthal camp No. 2.

In contrast to Alfred Konieczny, who writes that only the Hungarian women remained in St. Georgenthal and that the Polish women of the Gebhardsdorf detachment continued marching to an unknown destination, Johanna B., herself a Polish woman, ends her report as follows: “All of us, Hungarian and Polish Jewish women, remained in St. Georgenthal until the last day of the war and were liberated by the Russians on May 8, 1945.”

**Sources**


Among the most important archival sources are AZIH (301/271); BA-L (IV 405 AR-Z 64/76 and IV 405 AR 812/70); and AMGR.

Hans Brenner

trans. Martin Dean
GROSS-ROSEN

Lager in Schlesien

non-Jewish Poles, Germans, and Frenchmen. They probably included only a portion of the prisoners. The rest stayed in the camp and were liberated there on May 9, 1945.

Previously, on April 11, 1945, a group of 30 prisoners from Geppersdorf reached the Brünnlitz camp. These prisoners had numbers from 77001 through 77030 (numbers in that range were issued in late January 1945. On April 22, 1945, at least 107 prisoners from this group found themselves at the Dörnhau camp, which was part of the Riese complex of camps.

There is a hypothesis that both transports (to the Brünnlitz and Dörnhau subcamps) were evacuation transports and included only a portion of the prisoners. The rest stayed in the camp and were liberated there on May 9, 1945.

The Geppersdorf subcamp essay was based on the article by Roman Olszyna from the journal Studia Słaskie (1979), titled "Gdzie są świadkowie tych zbrodni?" Also used was the work of Alfred Konieczny, "Stan badań nad numeracją więźniów w obozie koncentracyjnym Gross-Rosen." Studia Śląskie, n.s., 36 (1979): 155–189; as well as Bogdan Cybulski, "Analiza stanu więźniów w podobozach kompleksu "Riese" w latach 1944–1945," Studia nad Faszyzmem i Zbrodniami Hitlewowskimi 7 (1981): 259–293. These Polish-language publications contain information on this subcamp.

The primary sources used are located in the AMGR. They include a questionnaire of a former prisoner of this camp; a transport list to subcamp Brünnlitz (imprint 6923/DP) comes from the work of Alfred Konieczny. Information comes from the work of Bogdan Cybulski.

1. The information about the numbering and the transport list to subcamp Brünnlitz (imprint 6923/DP) comes from the work of Alfred Konieczny. Information comes from the work of Bogdan Cybulski.

2. The date of the liberation of the camp comes from Roman Olszyna’s article.

Notes

2. AZIH, 301/271.
5. Johanna B., report, p. 3.
6. AMGR, DP No. 2829.
8. AMGR, No. A 2456.

Geppersdorf

The Geppersdorf (Milcice) subcamp was formed in late January 1945. It held male prisoners evacuated from the Auschwitz concentration camp. They had all probably passed through the reorganization point in Gleiwitz (Gliwice), where evacuation columns from Auschwitz were reformed and sent further on. Approximately 400 prisoners reached the Geppersdorf camp. They were predominately Polish, German, Hungarian, Dutch, and French Jews, as well as non-Jewish Poles, Germans, and Frenchmen. They probably received numbers 97061 through 97406, as numbers in that range were issued in late January 1945. On April 22, 1945, at least 107 prisoners from this group found themselves at the Dörnhau camp, which was part of the Riese complex of camps.

Previously, on April 11, 1945, a group of 30 prisoners from Geppersdorf reached the Brünnlitz camp. These prisoners had numbers from 77001 through 77030 (numbers in this range might also have been issued in late January 1945). On April 22, 1945, at least 107 prisoners from this group found themselves at the Dörnhau camp, which was part of the Riese complex of camps.

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2. The date of the liberation of the camp comes from Roman Olszyna’s article.
The camp numbered approximately 25 people. Katarzyna Reimann held the post of Lagerführerin. We also know the names of some of the guards: Frieda Seidel, Erika Gross, Ida Heidrich, Lucy Hoffmann, Maria Hoffmann, Hildegard Kaurud, Elfriede Milich, Ida Otto, Ida Scholz, Luise Schutzmann, Elza Jentsch, Marta Kühnast, Marta Leuschner, and Walli Sussenbach. Bala Zelynger was a prisoner-functionary.\(^1\)

The camp evacuation began on February 8, 1945. The prisoners reached the town of Janowice on foot and from there were transported to the camp in St. Georgenthal (Jířetín later Jiřetín pod Jedlovou in the Czech Republic), then to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

There were several trials of camp staff after the war. The following were tried by the Special Criminal Court for the Wrocław Appellate Court District: Marta Kühnast (born January 21, 1901; sentenced to five years in prison in a verdict of June 27, 1946); Elza Jentsch (born August 28, 1912; sentenced to four years in prison in a verdict of June 8, 1946); Lucy Hoffmann (born September 28, 1919; sentenced to eight years in prison in a verdict of September 14, 1946); Erika Gross (born November 22, 1921; sentenced to four years in prison in a verdict of March 22, 1946); Marta Leuschner (born February 19, 1922; sentenced to six years in prison in a verdict of September 19, 1946); Ida Otto (born March 6, 1906; sentenced to six years in prison in a verdict of October 30, 1946); Ida Scholz (born December 27, 1909; sentenced to seven years in prison in a verdict of February 21, 1946; released on probation in 1952).

The following were tried by the Świdnica District Court: Ida Heidrich (born April 19, 1912; sentenced to four years in prison in a verdict of January 21, 1947); Walli Süssenbach (born March 26, 1921; sentenced to five years in prison in a verdict of February 7, 1947); Luise Schutzmann (born October 8, 1919; sentenced to three years in prison in a verdict of April 21, 1947); Elfriede Milich (born December 16, 1902; sentenced to three years in prison in a verdict of May 5, 1947); Frieda Seidel (born June 3, 1902; sentenced to three years in prison in a verdict of April 21, 1947).\(^6\)

**SOURCES** Information on the Gräben subcamp can be found in Alfred Konieczny, “Kobiety w obozie koncentracyjnym Gross-Rosen w latach 1944–1945,” *Świt* 40 (1982); and in particular on the SS members, see Elżbieta Kobierska-Motas, *Członkowie załóg i więźniowie funkcjonary niemieckich obozów, więzień i gett skazani przez sądy polskie* (Warsaw, 1992).

Archive materials concerning the Gräben subcamp can be found in AMGR in Walbryzych and AZIH in Warsaw. These consist mainly of collections of memories, as well as accounts and questionnaires written by former female prisoners at Gräben. Case files of staff members from the Gräben camp who were tried in Polish courts after the war are kept by the AK-IPN in Warszaw. Copies of these files also can be found in the AMGR.

**NOTES**

1. AZIH, Collection of Accounts and Testimony, Account No. 3282, Halina Inster.
2. AMGR, 122/25/MF, 122/259/MF, 122/62/MF, and 122/113/MF.
3. AZIH, Collection of Accounts and Testimony, Account No. 3284, Halina Inster.
4. Ibid.
6. AMGR, 122/177/MF—Records of the Special Criminal Court for the Wrocław Appellate Court District, versus E. Jentsch; AMGR, No. 122/198/MF—Records of the Special Criminal Court for the Wrocław Appellate Court District, versus M. Leuschner; AMGR, 122/181/MF—Records of the Special Criminal Court for the Wrocław Appellate Court District, versus M. Kühnast.

**GRAFENORT**

The Gross-Rosen subcamp in the town of Grafenort (later Gorzanów, near Bystyzca Klodzka) was created in late March and early April 1945. It was a transit camp and was formed when the Polish Jewish women who had been living at another Gross-Rosen subcamp in Mittelsteine (later Ścinawka Średnia), were moved there.

Approximately 200 women were transferred to Grafenort. Probably all of them had begun their camp journey in the Łódź ghetto.

Grafenort was not a typical camp; the prisoners were lodged in a building standing at the edge of town. The building was brick, large, and several stories tall, and the windows were barred. Hanna Gumprecht testified that they had been quartered in rooms with double-decker bunks.\(^1\) Another prisoner, Franciszka Ruzga (living in the camp under the name of Francja Pietrykowska), remembered that they were lodged in a great hall with straw mattresses on the floor.\(^2\) Female SS guards (Aufseherinnen) guarded them.

The women were mainly put to work building trenches. It took them about an hour to walk to work, carrying the heavy shovels and stones used in the construction. They dug ditches while standing in the water in tattered clogs.\(^3\) A smaller group of prisoners worked leveling gravel along railroad tracks. Male SS men guarded them at work.

On May 8, 1945, there was an attempt to evacuate the subcamp toward the city of Glatz (later Klodzko). But the women were sent back to Grafenort because of the street fighting that had been going on in Glatz. The SS men escorting them fled on the way back. The women returned on their own to the building they had occupied. It turned out that the female SS guards had also fled. The Soviet forces entered Grafenort the next day, and the prisoners regained their freedom.

After liberation, the women were taken to Glatz. For several days the Russians fed them in their field kitchen and put the sick ones in an army hospital. After a while some of them were put onto a train and, after four days’ journey, returned to Łódź.\(^4\) Others went to Western Europe.
GRÄFELICH-RÖHRSDORF

A forced labor camp (ZAL) for Jews was formed at Gräflich-Röhrsdorf (Skarbków). It held women who were put to work at the Teichgräber linen spinning mill. The labor camp had been transferred to the administration of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp on September 4, 1944. It was then that the 150 women received numbers 56051 through 56100 and 56201 through 56300. The literature lists the figure of approximately 250 female prisoners who were interned at the camp.

Upon the camp’s transfer, the women, who were now Gross-Rosen prisoners, continued working at the linen factory. Some of them were assigned to work handling flax at a barn near the town of Egelsdorf (later Mroczkowice). Another group of women from the camp were put to work at the Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft (AEG) plant.

The subcamp was closed in late January 1945, and the prisoners were moved to the Kratzau subcamp, which was also under Gross-Rosen.

SOURCES

This article is based on the work of Alfred Konieczny, “Kobiety w obozie koncentracyjnym Gross-Rosen w latach 1944–1945,” Ssín 40 (1982); as well as by Bogdan Cybulski in his study Obozy podporządkowane KL Gross-Rosen (stan badań) (Rogoźnica, 1987).

Available archive materials concerning the Grafenort subcamp can be found in the AMGR in Wałbrzych, as well as in the AZIH in Warsaw. These are accounts of former female prisoners of this camp.

Barbara Sawicka
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES

1. The information about the numbering comes from the AMGR, imprint 7/119-c/MF.

GROSS-KOSCHEN

The exact point in time when the Gross-Koschen subcamp was erected is not recorded in the documents. In the late summer of 1944, 200 prisoners from the Gross-Rosen concentration camp erected a barracks camp on the grounds of a former gravel pit at Gross-Koschen, in order to receive a still-larger number of inmates. Both of the two large barracks blocks were built by Polish prisoners, who had been sent to the concentration camp as prisoners from the Warsaw Uprising of August 1944. In Gross-Rosen they had been registered with numbers from the series 58000 to 59000.¹

The erection of the camp was in preparation for the transfer of the Aircraft Dismantling Work from Auschwitz to Gross-Koschen. Former German prisoner of Gross-Koschen Friedrich Köhn wrote: “The core crew of about three hundred prisoners from Auschwitz arrived in the middle of the forest, underneath the Koschenberg, into an existing camp, where about two hundred prisoners from Gross-Rosen had already built a barracks and the cottage for the camp leader.”²

This transport from Auschwitz on November 11, 1944, included 351 men who were registered with entry numbers from Gross-Rosen, to which the newly erected subcamp belonged, between 86351 and 86701.³ A further transport on January 1, 1945, likewise from Auschwitz, brought 431 prisoners to Gross-Koschen, to whom the entry numbers 92002 to 92432 were issued.⁴

According to statements by former prisoner Köhn, the maximum camp population can be estimated at 800 prisoners.⁵ Polish historian Mieczysław Molenda speaks of 2,500 prisoners, a number that also appears in Karl-Heinz Gräfe and Hans-Jürgen Töpfer.⁶

The subcamp prisoners were, above all, Poles and Russians but also French, Italians, Croats, Czechs, and a few Germans, the last mostly as Kapos.

For the choice of location, the decisions of the corresponding main commissions and of the Armaments Ministry may have been decisive. Nearby existed the Lautwerk, one of the aluminum works of the Vereinigten Aluminium-Werke AG (VAW) Berlin.

In the Aircraft Dismantling Work that was transferred from Auschwitz, defective aircraft that had either been shot down or were otherwise incapable of flight were dismantled. Valuable machinery, electrical components, motors, and weapons went to the aircraft industry for repair or direct reuse. The other material, airframes, and wings went to be

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melted down in the aluminum works. The Koschenberg gravel pit had a connection to the railway main line at its disposal and was connected with the Lautawerk aluminum works, which was only a few kilometers away, via the shunting station at Hohenbocka. Sidings were laid to the Gross-Koschen Dismantling Work, leading through the work halls. The prisoners were brought out of the camp and into the factory grounds through a narrow path enclosed with barbed wire. Likewise, the factory itself was surrounded with wire and observed from watchtowers. During work hours, the open land in the area of the Dismantling Work was also secured by guard posts. The inner area, the prisoners’ camp, was secured against escape attempts by an electrically charged fence and guards on watchtowers.

The living quarters apparently did not even offer the otherwise common multitiered wooden bunks as sleeping places. “All prisoners were poorly clothed and poorly nourished. In the barracks, everything laid on the floor between straw and rags,” reported former state hunting master Putzke from Lautawerk. The sanitary facilities were inadequate, and there was often a shortage of water. “The ubiquitous louse infestation facilitated the spread of infectious diseases. As a result of hunger, dysentery increased steadily. The area foreseen for the sick was constantly overfilled. The poor camp clothing did not protect against the cold. Through the work in the open, mass outbreaks of colds occurred. Despite fevers, many prisoners had to stay at their workplaces. There was only insufficient medical care and little in the way of medical supplies. The death rate rose steadily,” wrote Polish historian Roman Olszyna, on the basis of survivor interviews. German Anneliese Gesch, who was allowed, as a local resident, to enter the outer zone, reported about her observances that the crematorium.

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Both witnesses also reported that bodies of the prisoners were at first doused with gasoline in trenches and burned in the open. Because of the widely perceptible smell of burning bodies, the SS camp leadership used an oven, equipped with a chimney, at the inactive gravel pit, to burn the dead and finally had an incineration oven, a kind of crematorium, built.

Abuse was part of the daily routine. Eyewitnesses describe a prisoner hung by his legs and beaten by the Kapos. In one case it was reported how a prisoner was hung head down in winter and doused with cold water.

Despite reports by survivors and eyewitnesses from the area as well as by individual Luftwaffe guards on the high number of deaths, the Gross-Rosen death book contains only one notification of a fatality, that of the Croat Domenoke Tarabachia on February 13, 1945. Here, the order of the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) was obviously in effect not to announce the deaths of Jews, Poles, Russians, and other citizens of the Soviet Union, as well as Sinti and Roma (Gypsies).

For the crimes committed in Gross-Koschen, the camp leader (Lagerführer), SS-Oberscharführer Alfred Engst, bears most of the responsibility; 20 SS guards and a number of Luftwaffe soldiers were subordinate to him as the guard force. He also depended on the terrorization of the prisoners on camp elder (Lagerältester) Lothar Wagner and the Ka-

In February 1945, the prisoners from Gross-Koschen were partially evacuated. On February 24, a first group of 64 prisoners arrived in Buchenwald; on February 26, a transport of 290 prisoners followed. Former prisoner Kühn reported on the final dissolution of the camp: “At the end of March 1945, the rest of the prisoners (one hundred men), with the members of the Luftwaffe and various items of equipment, drove to Pocking, near Passau. The camp leader, Engst, went with them. We stayed in Pocking until the end of April 1945 and were then transferred to Dachau.”

**SOURCES**


Primary source material on this camp may be found in AMGR.

**NOTES**

1. AMGR, No. 3.15.1.1., Wieniowie obozu Gross-Koschen według niepelnych danych archiwum srodoniska.
4. Ibid., p. 187.
7. Cf. camp sketches by the former prisoners Kühn, Józef S. (number 86378), and Andrzej Sz. (number 59737), in Winkler, *Aussenlager*, pp. 21, 23, 25.
GRULICH

In late September or in October 1944, a transport of prisoners from the Gross-Rosen concentration camp was probably sent to the town of Grulich (Králiky), where a subcamp was formed. Most of the surviving accounts of prisoners who were in that transport show that approximately 160 men were transported to the subcamp at that time. But one account states that the transport included about 190 people. The latter number is supported by a document that Gross-Rosen concentration camp Commander Hassebroek sent to Commander H. Frank on November 18, 1944. By then, Grulich numbered 200 prisoners, with a planned population increase to 800, which never occurred, according to available information.

The camp was located near the Fahrzeug u. Motorenwerke plant. It was composed of a living barrack (the prisoners were put in one part of it; the staff occupied the other) and a “little barrack” that contained the infirmary (Revier) and sanitary facilities.

SS-Untersturmführer Emanuel Langer was in charge of setting up the camp and initially served as the camp commander. When he was recalled from the post to the main camp, he was replaced by SS-Unterführer Heinrich Hett. The staff was composed of 5 noncommissioned officers and 13 SS guards. The post of camp elder (Lagerältester) was held by Jerzy Zakrzewski, who, one witness testified, “was characterized by particular sadism.” “At every step, for any reason,” this witness stated, “[Zakrzewski] would abuse prisoners by beating them with a rubber strap or unending exercises…”

The prisoners were divided into two working groups. One group was sent to work in a factory that produced aircraft propellers. Kurt Hartman was the factory director. He was transferred to Litomierzyce in October 1944 and replaced by Karl Schuser, who had come from Berlin. The prisoners put to work there did such things as grinding propellers, which was a very arduous job due to the aluminum dust. Work was done in a two-shift system of 12 hours each daily. Forced laborers were also put to work at the factory. A German foreman supervised the prisoners’ work.

The other group of prisoners was assigned to do jobs associated with constructing the new camp, which was to be situated on a hill near the town. According to a former prisoner’s account, the camp was built on the site of an underground factory. Construction started by fencing the site. The barracks were assembled from prefabricated wooden components. A cinderblock and brick building was also erected. English prisoners delivered the building materials. Civilian Germans and SS men, who had “their Kapos for help,” oversaw the construction. The newly built camp was to be for prisoners who were to be put to work when the factory was expanded. That plan never materialized; consequently, some barracks were demolished toward the end of the war.

Sometimes prisoners from the construction commando were assigned to unload railroad cars after they finished work at the new camp site.

One prisoner, a Russian, had special talents. He made interesting rings from metal. He did that after work, needing as much as a week to make one. He would sometimes get a pack of cigarettes or a piece of bread from a guard for his work.

The camp did not have its own kitchen. The kitchen was on the factory premises. The prisoners brought dinners and provisions from the kitchen. As explained in one account:

Everyone volunteered to go there… For reasons of economy, the Germans cooked potatoes unpeeled… At the mess hall, everyone had to peel their potatoes. Some guards allowed us to talk to the cleaning women at the civilian mess. We asked those women to always put those potato peels in piles at the edges of the tables, next to which we had our dinner pails. What a joy it was when we brought pocketfuls of them to the commando in our coats or shirts… There were instances when there would be pieces of bread in those piles of potato peels, or even some well-packaged cigarettes. And that was a time when the civilian population had ration coupons for cigarettes. We asked the cleaning women to provide us with onions or onion peels, because the Russians also made cigarettes of onion peels. Later there were more and more volunteers to bring dinners, as hunger and cold were our worst enemies… For supper we would mostly get one kilogram [2.2 pounds] of bread for ten people. The bread would differ: squashed, dirty, crusty, etc. The Russians made a primitive scale and the bread was divided down to the gram. The same applied to jam, cheese, etc.3

The prisoners washed daily in the camp washroom without soap or towels. Once a week they were taken to the bathhouse in the factory buildings. At that time their underwear and clothing were taken away for delousing. After work, the prisoners employed at the factory could wash in the bathhouse with the civilians, but only when the guards were friendly toward them. On those occasions, civilian prisoners would give them pieces of bread and cigarettes. The prisoners

11. Ibid., p. 9; statements of the witnesses Jurk, Buschmann, and Hartmann.
would carry these gifts into camp stealthily, to share them with their friends.

The infirmary at Grulich was located in a small space set aside in the barrack. It had several beds. According to one witness: “Initially there were no doctors and the barrack chief would dress wounds. After some time, a Russian doctor was brought in from Gross-Rosen, but he was at camp a short time and was taken back there. Then a Polish doctor and a Yugoslavian (Croatian) dentist were brought in, and they were there until the end.” The dentist was prisoner Pleše Dragutin (no. 29709). The few surviving reports of dental services rendered show that from January 20 to April 19, 1945, 736 prisoners were examined, and 605 procedures were performed, including 76 extractions.

The most frequent ailments in the camp were phlegmon, diarrhea, scabies, and colds. Despite the harsh conditions, a high death rate was not reported. One prisoner, a Pole, died of emaciation, and his body was buried in the local cemetery.

As at other camps, there were escape attempts at Grulich. Due to the lack of records, information about escapes is not available. One prisoner recalls how he and a friend planned to escape but disagreed as to the date. They talked about December during the cold and snowy winter, totally unfavorable for such an undertaking. As stated in his account:

[One day] on the way to work on the second shift— the sirens suddenly began to wail; it was an air-raid alarm. We had kerosene lanterns with us when we went to work in the evening. The guards told us to put them out and run to the factory. When we were already in the production hall, there was consternation among the guards as to what to do next? They told us to start working, everyone at his own workstation. I looked around and saw that the milling machine that my friend worked at was unattended. They called off the air-raid alarm, and here there was one Pole missing. They got us together, counted and counted, but there was someone missing. Suddenly they made a decision—lay all the prisoners down on the cement floor. . . . The cold draft from the floor was indescribable. . . . The guards kept counting and kicking us. . . . Finally everyone went to their stations to work.5

During roll call two or three days after that event, the camp officials told the prisoners that the fugitive had been caught and hanged.

There are several accounts of prisoner escapes, but they sometimes differ. For example, one prisoner recalls an escape attempt by three Grulich prisoners who were caught and hanged at the main camp. According to this account, three other prisoners were sent to Grulich to replace them in early February 1945. One of them was Edmund Dziuk (no. 85806). Another prisoner remembers the attempted escape of two prisoners who were also caught.

A witness describes an event that was supposedly the consequence of helping to organize the escape of several Russian prisoners: “I think it was in February 1945 on an ordinary working day at about 4:00 P.M. At that time I saw . . . an SS-man (always pale and reportedly ill with tuberculosis) shoot a Russian prisoner called Red Ivan . . . . The prisoner was working on the construction of a barrack outside the camp . . . and was pushing a wheel barrow, and the SS-man was following right behind him and then shot straight at the prisoner, getting him in the back. . . . Supposedly they carted away the prisoner’s body to the Gross-Rosen camp, as I don’t remember him being buried.”6

Besides the initial large transport, prisoners were not brought to the camp in great numbers, but just a few at most. For example, one prisoner was sent to Grulich in December: Ignacy Wojniak (no. 88122).

In March or April 1945, the prisoners were sent to the vicinity of Grulich to clear the railroad tracks, which had been blocked by a train blown up by Czech underground fighters.

The Grulich camp was evacuated between May 6 and 8, 1945. A column of prisoners was formed at dawn. Some of them were assigned to pull wagons loaded with food and the SS men’s things. Sick prisoners were also loaded on wagons. Only a portion of the staff oversaw the column in the evacuation march. They walked all day and spent the night in a barn. There they were fed some cooked potatoes. The following morning, the prisoners discovered that all the SS men had fled. Some of the prisoners stayed at the nearby school, while the rest dispersed.

Sources Some information on the Grulich subcamp can be found in Dorota Sula’s study Filie KL Gross-Rosen (wybór artykułów) (Walbrzych, 2001). See also Katarzyna Pawlak-Weiss, “Żeńskie filie KL Gross-Rosen położone na terenie obecnych Czech w latach 1944–45” (Master’s thesis, Wrocław University, 2002).

Archival records with information on the Grulich subcamp can be found at the AMGR.

Katarzyna Pawlak-Weiss
trans. Gerard Majka

Notes
1. AMGR, DP6500/4-b, Report of examination of witness Edward Krukowski at the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland.
2. AMGR, DP6500/4-c, Result of investigation on the Grulich camp conducted by the Czechoslovakian Governmental Commission for the Prosecution of Nazi War Criminals, dated June 24, 1974.
4. AMGR, DP-A, Włodzimierz Świętkowski’s questionnaire.
GRÜNBERG I

During World War II, the output of the Deutsche Wollenwaren Manufaktur AG of Grünberg (now Zielona Góra) was geared toward military needs. The plant produced material for uniforms, army coats, parachutes, and blankets. As early as May 1942, the management was engaged in preparing and updating its building at 33 Breslauer Strasse to meet the needs of a planned Organisation Schmelt camp for Jewish women. The plans called for the construction of brick buildings, a kitchen, laundry facilities, and offices. The initial transport of a planned Organisation Schmelt camp for Jewish women.

The plans called for the construction of brick buildings, a kitchen, laundry facilities, and offices. The initial transport of Jewish women was brought in from the environs of Katowitz (Katowice) and Kraków in 1942; 200 women and approximately 100 men arrived at that time. On October 26, 1942, Wollenwaren employed 1,410 Germans, 412 Jewish forced laborers, and 22 French prisoners of war (POWs). Surviving Wollenwaren records show that there were 576 or 579 forced laborers working there in the first quarter of 1943; there was an increase in April, when 748 prisoners were recorded. The new forced laborers came from such places as the closed camp at Neustadt. Former prisoners who have been interviewed provide a higher figure of 1,000 or even 2,000 prisoners. What is characteristic of these recollections is that the number of German workers decreased as the number of male Jewish workers increased.

The Jewish women were accommodated in the factory's two main production halls. Each of the halls could hold 300 to 500 women; they slept on wooden, double-decker bunks. The camp was guarded, although the women had more freedom until 1944; the only thing they were not allowed to do was leave the factory premises. They walked to work escorted by guards and later by female SS guards (Aufseherinnen). They worked in various departments as needed. The food was wretched, a starvation diet. The women were emaciated. Beating and persecution by the staff were a daily occurrence. The women were deprived of meals for even the slightest offenses, long roll calls were held, and their heads were shaved. Failing machines were a problem for the women, as they were accused of sabotage. They worked 12 hours, with a break for lunch. The conditions at camp were unsanitary. Dirt, lice, and bedbugs were widespread. There was no medical care.

A shortage of female guards was a problem during Gross-Rosen's operation to take over the Organisation Schmelt forced labor camps. The management of Wollenwaren negotiated with the local employment agency, and 48 women were sent to Ravensbrück for training in May 1944. The guard candidates were selected from among the German women employed at the factory. Their health was checked. People with a strong mental disposition and no criminal record were chosen. The course lasted two weeks, although one of these Grünberg overseers claimed she was in such a training program for three months. When the women returned from training, Grünberg was turned over to the SS. This was most probably on June 10, 1944. (One of these overseers relates that it was in early July 1944.)

One of the prisoners, Anna Charzykow, testifies that on the day the camp was taken over, all the women had to pass totally naked before each SS man in the general hall, while the SS men made notes. All the new Aufseherinnen were present the day the SS took the camp over and started their jobs that day. They were dressed in army uniforms. Once they were recorded by the SS men, the prisoners received numbers that they had to hang on their necks. Anna Jon held the position of Lagerführerin (camp leader). The staff mentioned by former prisoners included Anna Viebig, Waltrand Schirmre, Hildegard Kuehn, Helga Siebert, and Anna Hempel. The exact size of the staff and the prisoner population when the camp was taken over by the SS is unknown. According to Alfred Konieczny, there were 999 women in the camp, who were assigned numbers 46902 through 47900.

Conditions worsened. Although officially approved by the Gross-Rosen provisions department, the food was almost a starvation diet. Everyone thought food was being stolen by the guards (superintendents) and cooks. Jewish prisoners were not allowed to receive packages, and there was also a ban issued on giving the inmates extra food. For even the slightest transgressions, they were punished by beating and deprived of meals, and responsibility was collective.

A selection was conducted every three months at the camp, and sick women were taken away, probably to Auschwitz. There was no significant medical care, although a Czech midwife treated the sick.

On January 28, 1945, a transport of Jewish women arrived at camp from the nearby Schlesiersee I and II camps. The camp was evacuated the next day. Opinions differ as to the transport's size: they range from 1,300 to 2,500. The inmates were divided into two groups. The first group went west toward Berlin. The women covered a distance of up to 40 kilometers (almost 25 miles) a day. They slept in barns. One prisoner managed to escape from the transport. She laid down under a car parked on the road; when the transport passed, she fled into the forest, where she hid for two weeks until the Soviet forces arrived. Another prisoner escaped near Guben, where the column had stopped for two days. It was then directed toward Jutgebog. The prisoners spent part of the trip packed in freight cars. In late February 1945, they reached the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. They died from starvation and emaciation over the subsequent weeks. Only a few survived.

The other group of women was sent toward Christianstadt. The column was under the command of Karl Herman Jeschke (he was Lagerführer at the Schlesiersee camp), Kraus, and Graetz. They traveled over snow-covered back roads. The prisoners were poorly clothed and undernourished; they spent the nights in sheds and roadside houses, dying in masses. At Bautzen, there was a mass execution of 70 women for the alleged theft of bread. In early March 1945, near Ölsnitz, 179 prisoners unable to march were loaded onto railroad cars. They reached the Zwodau camp on March 6, 1945; 19 women died en route, and more died at the camp. Part of the transport reached the Flossenbürg concentration camp subcamp
Helmbrbrechts at the same time. Jeschke turned the prisoners over to the camp command. Locked in unfinished barracks, without medical care, and miserably nourished, masses of them became sick. They were not even assigned to any work. They lived under these conditions for six weeks. The camp authorities decided to continue the evacuation because the U.S. Army was approaching. On April 13, an evacuation column of 581 women set out toward Zwodau, where it was joined by another group of prisoners. In all, the transport that set out from Zwodau numbered 700 prisoners. They reached Wallern (Volary) on May 4, 1945. Approximately 300 women remained. They were locked in a shed. The local people were forbidden to help them at all. Some of the women were unable to march by this point, so the SS men demanded that the mayor provide carts. The women were loaded onto them and taken to Prachatitz (Prachatice). The rest had to finish the trip on foot. The march took place under the fire of an airplane. The stronger women managed to flee; in retaliation, 17 women were taken from a cart, dragged into the woods, and shot there. The remaining women were locked in a shed, and the staff fled. The local people brought them food and took the prisoners to the hospital, where 114 died. They were buried in the local cemetery. Only a few women from Gross-Rosen survived this horrific death march.

After the war, the Zielona Góra District Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes held investigations into the crimes committed against Jewish women at the Grünberg labor camp, but they were discontinued because there were no supporting materials to establish the personal data of the SS men. An investigation was also conducted by the Czechoslovak War Crimes Agency in the matter of the extermination of female Polish, Czech, and Hungarian prisoners of the Jewish faith.

**SOURCES**

Published sources on this camp include Dorota Sula, **Filie KL Gros-Rosen** (Wałbrzych, 2001); and B. Robinson, "Zbrodnie popełnione w obozach 'Organizacji Schmelz' w świetle wspomnień więźniarek," in Wykorzystanie niemieckiej pracy więźniów KL Gros-Rosen przez III Rzeszę, ed. Hans Brenner (Wałbrzych: Muzeum Gross-Rosen, 1999). Documents include records from interviews of witnesses from investigations conducted by the OKBZHw, a branch of the GKBZHwP, and documents from investigations conducted by the Czechoslovak Administration for the prosecution of military crimes in the case of the extermination of Jewish Polish, Czech, and Hungarian female inmates of the Auschwitz concentration camp and the Gross-Rosen Grünberg subcamp. These documents are located in the AMGR and come from the GKBZHwP.

**GRÜNBERG II**

According to the sparse information available, Gross-Rosen’s Grünberg II subcamp was formed in the city of Grünberg (Zielona Góra) in October 1944. The first group of prisoners were Hungarian Jews sent from Auschwitz, who were given the numbers 73751 through 73800. Another transport of Hungarian Jews arrived in subsequent days; they were given the numbers 76001 through 76130. That confirms that 180 prisoners were interned there. They probably worked in the same plant as the women incarcerated at Grünberg I: Deutsche Wollenwaren Manufaktur AG.

The fact that the death sentence was carried out on two prisoners is confirmed; they had attempted to escape on October 27, 1944. They were Sandor Blau, number 76008, and Sandor Grünfeld, number 76045. There is no information on the camp’s staff or evacuation.

**SOURCES**

A document from the GKBZHwP confirming the deaths of two inmates at Grünberg II served as confirmation of the existence of this subcamp. See also Alfred Konieczny, “Egzekucje w obozie koncentracyjnym Gross-Rosen,” SFiZH 4 (1979).

Leokadia Lewandowska trans. Gerard Majka

**GUBEN**

The Guben subcamp was established in the summer of 1944 in the Prussian province of Brandenburg. That part of the camp that housed the women prisoners was on the eastern bank of the Neisse River, in the present-day Polish town of Gubin. The women worked on the western side of the Neisse in the German town of Guben.

Alfred Konieczny states that at the end of July 1944 a transport of around 600 Hungarian Jews arrived in Guben from Auschwitz. The women bore prisoner numbers from 10631 to 11280. This date is earlier than the date that the International Tracing Service (ITS) gives for the first mention of the camp—August–September 1944. A second transport followed in September 1944 of about 350 women (prisoner numbers 57581 to 58200). According to Andreas Peter, transports arrived on August 21 and 29, 1944, and in November 1944.

Based on interviews with survivors of the camp, Peter postulated that there were at least 350 prisoners in the camp, but more likely the number was between 900 and 1,000. As in other Gross-Rosen subcamps, the female inmates were mostly Jewish women from Poland and Hungary. Many were related. A good number were under 20 years of age. After selections in Auschwitz or Krakou-Plaszow, they were sent to Guben. Others were sent directly from Hungary to the camp.

The women worked for the Lorenz Radio Company, a well-regarded firm in the electronics industry. During the war, it manufactured electronic equipment for aircraft including radios. Until 1943, it was based in Berlin-Tempelhof and was relocated to Guben in that year. The new factory was located in Ufer Strasse, in what was the Berlin-Guben Hat Factory. That building had been “aryanized” in 1938. The prisoners were accommodated in a camp that had an electrified fence. The camp was on a sports field in a forest, close to a Soviet prisoner-of-war (POW) camp.

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The women interviewed by Peter made widely different statements on the living conditions in the subcamp. Some prisoners, such as Frieda Kahn and Anna POLLAK, refer to long hours of work, lack of food and clothing, frequent beatings, and serious illnesses as typical for the camp; others such as Rachel KRAMER and Bracha GOREEN state that the conditions in the camp were much better than in Auschwitz. According to them, there were no deaths, the work was light, the food was satisfactory, and the treatment by the guards and foremen was decent and friendly. The civilian workers in the factory, they claim, treated the Jewish women as human beings, often spoke with them, and provided gestures of support. The female Jewish camp doctor, Esther FOX, confirms this: “In this place all the girls...were going daily to a factory, came after a long march back in the evening, tired, exhausted, hungry, cold. But there was not much physical abuse, but nevertheless all were emaciated. I tried to do my best.”

The last mention of the camp is for February 1945. It is likely that the women were then evacuated with the inmates of the Grünberg camp via Pinnow and Jamitz in death marches to Bergen-Belsen.

SOURCES

In addition, documents on the Gross-Rosen subcamps are located in various archives. The USHMM holds the witness statements by Esther FOX (Acc.1995.A.332) and Katarina Bloch Feuer (Napló közel 50 év utan) and an oral-history interview with Alice Lok Cahana (RG-50.030*0051). The YVA also holds reports by survivors on the subcamp in Collection 03/4337, Tape No. 033 C/730 (Shoshana Stark) and No. 015/2397 (Frieda Kahan); 03/6864, Tape No. V-D 80 (Rachel Kramer) and No. 015/2373 (Record of interview with the Jankovits sisters). “Tränen der Menschlichkeit. Ergreifende Zeilen einer jüdischen Frau an die Bewohner von Guben,” LR-GR, October 28, 1994, also contains a survivor’s report.

Evelyn Zegenhagen
trans. Stephen Pallavicini

NOTES
2. USHMM, Acc.1995.A.532, Esther Fox, A memoir relating to the experiences in the Łódź ghetto, Auschwitz, Guben, and Bergen-Belsen.

HALBAU

The Halbau subcamp came into being on or about July 15, 1944, at a site where Soviet prisoners of war (POWs) had previously been held. The prisoners were Poles (75 percent), Russians (about 20 percent), Czechs, Italians, Greeks, Yugoslavians, Dutch, and Germans. The camp contained 1,050 prisoners. Prisoners qualified as mechanics and metalworkers were sent primarily to Halbau, although initially several dozen prisoners were put to work expanding the camp. Prisoners were mainly assigned to work at the Winkler factory manufacturing military aircraft propellers, where they worked in two 12-hour shifts, with a half-hour break for lunch, which they ate on the plant premises. German foremen assigned and supervised the work.

The factory was located about three kilometers (1.9 miles) from the camp. Making the trip was an extra effort for the prisoners, especially during bad weather and in the winter. One prisoner recalls: “We had wooden clogs on our bare feet. The snow stuck to the clogs, and the Germans prodded and beat us so we’d go faster. So we’d take off the clogs and walk barefoot to keep up in the march. Our legs were swollen, festering and frostbitten.”

After the major work enlarging the camp was completed, some of the prisoners were used to form a construction commando, which did building and repair work on factory premises. The woodworkers’ commando of about 20 to 30 prisoners at a private firm in the town of Halbau (now Iłowa) had the easiest work, relatively speaking. The prisoners made windows for the barracks. SS men oversaw the group.

A separate electricians’ commando with 15 prisoners was also set up. Factory employees often used to bring their broken radios to the commando. The prisoners had contact with the world, thanks to these repairs.

SS-Hauptscharführer Mathias Hesshaus was camp commander. Stanislaw Kaczysko was the camp elder (Lagerältester); convicted of common crimes, he wound up at Sachsenhausen concentration camp in June 1940, then was transferred to Gross-Rosen. For the slightest offenses, Ka-

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945
czyżek would beat prisoners with a huge ladle called “Joseph” and force them to do long, exhausting exercises. He also sexually abused young prisoners. In one of his depositions, he said: “I admit that I beat prisoners in my capacity as quarters, barracks and camp elder. Some prisoners died because of the blows I inflicted upon them. On the other hand I myself was beaten even when I was camp elder and I often had to beat others to maintain order. Sometimes the SS ordered me to do so, and sometimes I would do it on my own. . . . The reason why I beat people was my cowardice and fear of my own death.”

For good work performance, prisoners were allotted bonuses in the form of vouchers, which they could use to buy something in the camp canteen. But what it came down to in practice was trading the vouchers for herring or snails in vinegar, and that only on Sundays. Prisoners were also punished for slight offenses by taking the vouchers away.

One prisoner recalls a rather extraordinary event, namely, a protest of prisoners against the starvation rations. In reply to an appeal to step up performance, one witness claimed, a group of prisoners “went to the camp commander and declared: ‘that they wouldn’t work with such food.’ Although astonished, the commander promised to attend to the matter. . . . From then on the portions of bread were increased to a double piece of bread—150 grams [5.3 ounces], and the soup was improved by adding groats, beans and vegetables. No one was called to account for the attempt at revolt.”

A camp infirmary at Halbau operated throughout the camp’s existence: 414 “patients,” but only 331 prisoners, were treated at the hospital from July 19, 1944, to February 11, 1945. That was because some wound up in the hospital more than once; 64 prisoners died in that period. The greatest number of deaths were in August (14), which was during the camp’s initial stage of operation and thus was a time of adapting to new, extreme conditions for many, and perhaps for the majority, of the prisoners. The same number of deaths (14) was recorded in January 1945, which is understandable, considering the weather conditions and associated illnesses and complications. The most frequent diseases the prisoners came down with were diarrhea, flu, pneumonia, and general emaciation of the body.

There were escape attempts, most of which ended tragically. In one case, for example, a Russian prisoner, Makary Cartakow, was brought to the assembly ground, and an SS man ran him through with a bayonet with the prisoners watching. He died in the camp hospital on November 6, 1944.

In their recollections, prisoners speak of sabotage on more than one occasion. Some of them portray the sabotage as an organized attempt at resistance, while others admit that the camp staff or workplace foremen treated any accidental breakdown of anything as sabotage. That was the case when a prisoner slipped and damaged a propeller when he fell; as punishment, he was sent to a penal commando. A two-week “stay” in a penal commando was also the punishment for poor work performance.

In October 1944, the camp command ordered that a choir be formed. Listening to the songs was a soothing experience for prisoners. A soccer team, another idea for occupying the prisoners’ “free time,” was ordered put together. It was headed by a prisoner named Korycki. However, no matches were played.

The Christmas holidays were an especially difficult time for prisoners, and they were peculiar at Halbau. Although there was a tree, Lagerältester Kaczysko dressed up as the Grim Reaper and walked around the tree with a scythe.

The camp was evacuated the evening of February 12, 1945. Sick and injured prisoners remained in the camp hospital, while the rest marched off. Several German “policemen” also stayed in camp. Even before the column left camp, it was joined by a group of 40 to 50 Jews from Gross-Rosen’s Bunzlau subcamp, who were brought in by an SS officer. The prisoners were harnessed to carts with steel rope. The commander traveled in one of the carts, which looked like a Gypsy shed, with his wife and belongings. For the starving and weak prisoners, such a march was beyond their strength. The first prisoner died on February 13. The commander allocated a cart for exhausted prisoners. Whenever the cart was so full that exhausted prisoners could not all fit in, it was stopped and the prisoners were murdered with a shot to the back of the head, most frequently in the woods. Approximately 20 such executions were conducted. As many as 300 prisoners may have died during the march, which took about two weeks. On March 1, the prisoners were loaded into freight cars at Wurzen and traveled on for 6 to 10 days. The prisoners were not given food or drink during that time, so there were more deaths. The prisoners were finally admitted to Bergen-Belsen on or about March 10. According to a prisoner, 408 prisoners survived, including 28 seriously ill ones.

After the war, only Stanisław Kaczysko was tried and sentenced to death by decree of Łódź District Court on August 30, 1947.

**SOURCES**
The most recent research on selected Gross-Rosen subsidiaries, and the basis of this entry, is Dorota Sula’s study *Filii KL Gross-Rosen (wybór artykułów)* (Wałbrzych, 2001). The Halbau subcamp is discussed on pp. 14–41. Additional information can be found in Bogdan Cybulski, *Obrazy podporządkowane KL Gross-Rosen (stan badań)* (Rogoźnica, 1987); and Jan Sipowicz, “Filia obozu koncentracyjnego Gross-Rosen w Iłowie w powiecie żagańskim,” *SFiZH* 1 (1974).

Archival materials housed at the AMGR include numerous surveys, orders of camp authorities, reports of witness interviews conducted by the GOKBZHwP (the originals are currently in the archives of the IPN), and former prisoner surveys, accounts, and recollections. The “Zeszyty z saperskim awiaryzmem chorych więźniów z rewiru szpitalnego Halbau,” kept by Doctor Jan Żaczek (AMGR, 108/7/MF), are a valuable source.

Dorota Sula

trans. Gerard Majka
NOTES
2. AMGR, 82/Dp, Extracts from the records of the criminal case against Stanisław Kaczysko, Sąd Okręgowy w Łodzi.

HALBSTADT
As a result of heavy bombing attacks on Hamburg, the firm Deutsche Messapparat GmbH (Messap) transferred part of its time-fuse manufacturing out of its factory in Hamburg-Langenhorn, where prisoners from Neuengamme had been put to work since 1942, to Halbstadt (Meziněsí). There the firm erected a camp for female prisoners in the sprawling factory grounds of the Werbe und Spinnerei (Weaving and Spinning Mill) Knopf. On October 27, 1944, a transport from Auschwitz II-Birkenau brought 550 women and girls to Halbstadt.1 Since they were forming a subcamp of Gross-Rosen, when they were registered with that main camp, they received the entry numbers 66501 through 67050.

In order to increase the number of camp prisoner-laborers, further transports were brought to Halbstadt, through which the camp's strength grew to between 1,500 and 2,000 female prisoners.2

On February 8, 1945, still another group of 49 women came to Halbstadt from the Gross-Rosen subcamp of Ober-Altstadt.

A large part of the female prisoners in Halbstadt were Polish Jews from the Łódź ghetto; others came from Ozorków and were probably also brought to Halbstadt via the Łódź ghetto and Auschwitz.3 Many siblings remained together on the transports to Halbstadt; this had a positive effect on their will to survive. So, for example, one finds records of the sisters or relatives Bela, Bronia, Cesia, and Rosa W. from Ozorków, and Mania, Minia, and Sala L. from Brzezina.4

One group of the female prisoners was put to work producing clock pieces for time fuses, in the newly transferred Messap factory; another group went to work in the Knopf firm's textile factory; and a third group was employed in gas mask production for the firm Schroll Söhne. The firm Deutsche Telefonwerke und Kabelindustrie AG (DE-TE-WE) Berlin, a subsidiary of the Siemens corporation, also probably employed these female prisoners.

Messap was a joint venture of the clock manufacturer Junghans, based in Schramberg in the Black Forest, with the production enterprise of the Army High Command (OKH) Verwertungsgesellschaft für Montanindustrie GmbH (Mining Industry Reprocessing Company), which already possessed years-long experience in fuse production on which to build. Messap used that experience to establish a system of norms and controls in the employment of the camp prisoners. Each prisoner had to complete the assembly of 120 clockworks for time fuses per day. The assembly was organized into several steps, for each of which a group of prisoners was employed. After each step, a prisoner, acting as an inspector, checked the workpiece. At the end, a civilian worker made a final check. The continual strain on the eyes involved in assembling the smallest pieces led in part to long-term damage to the prisoners' eyesight.

The woman who led the camp, SS-Oberaufseherin Lonny Winzer,5 under whom were assigned first 23 and later 28 female SS overseers, had no male guard force for the Halbstadt camp, because the camp for the female prisoners lay within the fenced-off factory grounds, which were watched over by civilian factory guards. The prisoners were accompanied by the SS overseers on their way from the living quarters to their workstations. They remained always within the fenced-off factory grounds.

It became apparent during the time of their incarceration that some of the women in Halbstadt were pregnant. According to statements from other prisoners, those women were taken away from Halbstadt to an unknown location.6 The SS-Oberaufseherin used several prisoners as functionaries, who were responsible to her in the maintenance of a strict camp routine. At their head was the camp elder (Lagerältester), Schmidt. Prisoner doctors and medics were also allocated to the transport of the prisoners. In this connection, Rachel A. also acted as a dental technician in Halbstadt.7

In the death register for the Halbstadt parish, four women who perished in the camp are entered: the first died on November 3, 1944, and the last on April 20, 1945.

The women and girls incarcerated in Halbstadt were not evacuated; they were freed by Soviet troops advancing through the area on May 9, 1945.8


Primary sources are available in AMGR, AG-T, and other repositories as noted in the citations.

Hans Brenner
trans. Geoffrey Megargee

NOTES
A Gross-Rosen subcamp was established in Hartmannsdorf (later Młoszów) in April 1944. It was a subcamp for male prisoners. The prisoners who arrived in the initial transport worked on the construction of camp buildings. The camp was situated in the town near the Hartmann textile factory.

It is difficult to determine how many transports were sent to Hartmannsdorf labor camp and how large they were. It is known that only individual prisoners were moved from the subcamp. There were approximately 1,000 prisoners at the camp. They were primarily Poles, nationals of the USSR, and Czechs, as well as (in lesser number) Germans, French, Italians, and Dutch. There was also a group of teenage prisoners who were no more than 17 years old when they were incarcerated at the camp. The prisoners lived in barracks; there were mattresses stuffed with straw on the bunks. There was one blanket for 2 prisoners. They had a change of underclothes every two weeks. There was a bathhouse operating on the subcamp premises, in which 20 prisoners could bathe at one time. It was cold and very crowded in the barracks. A hospital (or infirmary, Revier) was set up in one of the barracks. It held an average of approximately 80 people. The prisoners often had to wait a very long time to be admitted to the hospital. A doctor prisoner provided medical care. He had only the simplest tools at his disposal: a few thermometers, scalpels, and syringes. For dressing material he had paper bandages and dressings and a small amount of disinfectants. The death rate at the camp was high. The prisoners most frequently became ill with pneumonia, kidney inflammations, phlegmon, and general body exhaustion. The bodies of dead prisoners were carted away to the Gross-Rosen main camp.

SS-Unterscharführer Alfred Juchelek was the subcamp's commander. The staff was composed of 20 SS men and a few dozen soldiers. The staff's quarters were on the camp premises.

One of the prisoner's workplaces was the Hartmann textile factory building where the Walter-Werke weapons factory was set up. The weaving machines were removed from a part of the space and were replaced by lathes, milling machines, and other equipment. They were put into service and started producing aircraft parts. The prisoners also worked in the factory drafting bureau, where they copied engineering drawings. The work lasted 12 hours per shift, and German foremen issued the orders and supervised the work. Prisoners also worked in the other part of the textile factory, the weaving mill. There they made fabric for the army as well as handkerchiefs.

A group of Hartmannsdorf prisoners was put to work in the nearby town of Marklissa (now Leśna), at a weapons factory, where they made V-1 and V-2 engines.

Some of the hardest work was in what was called the Stollenkommando, drilling tunnels in a mountainside near Marklissa. When work was complete, the local weapons factory was supposed to be moved there.

There were escape attempts made by prisoners incarcerated at Hartmannsdorf. One occurred on May 19, 1944 (prisoner Grigori Mischin), and another was on June 1 (prisoner Józef Malik). Both were unsuccessful. The prisoners were caught, but what happened to them afterward is unknown. Subsequent attempts also ended in the fugitives being caught, followed by torture, being sent to a penal company, or a death sentence at camp.

The most famous escape attempt from Hartmannsdorf occurred on August 25, 1944. Eight prisoners were involved in it. Their escape route was a tunnel they had made especially for the purpose, leading from a barrack near the fence. But the escapees were apprehended and sent to a penal company at the main camp.

The only prisoner who managed to escape from the sub-camp was Zygmunt Czechowski. He escaped by the roof during the night shift at the factory. During his trek, the fugitive was aided by Polish forced laborers he encountered along the way.

The Christmas holidays were an important time in the prisoners' lives. The camp officials gave permission for a Christmas tree to be in every barrack; prisoners could sing carols in their native languages. They also received an extra portion of food for the holidays.

Evacuation was ordered on February 15 or 16, 1945. The prisoners were ordered to form marching columns. Only the sick at the camp hospital stayed behind under the care of the doctor prisoner. They were overseen by SS men living in the village. The patients had quite a bit of freedom. The stronger ones were in charge of feeding the rest of the prisoners, and the food improved slightly when the meat of horses that had died near the camp was cooked. Despite the improved living conditions, nine prisoners died and were buried on camp premises. On March 19, 1945, all the surviving prisoners were transported to the Zittau labor camp, where they were liberated on May 8, 1945.

The prisoners who left the camp had to pull carts loaded with food and the belongings of the staff's family members, who were also being evacuated. Many prisoners were shot along the way, as they no longer had the strength to go on, and their bodies were pushed into roadside ditches. The food during evacuation was a starvation diet; one loaf of bread for 12 people. Sometimes soup was cooked for them during stops.
After seven or eight days of trekking, the evacuation columns reached the Zittau subcamp. Here the tradesmen prisoners (such as metalworkers) were separated and sent to the Reichenau labor camp. Prisoners who were no longer able to travel stayed at Zittau. The rest set out again. When they reached Weimar, they were loaded onto coal cars and taken to the Buchenwald concentration camp. A total of 399 Hartmannsdorf prisoners were recorded in that camp’s records on March 12, 1945.

**SOURCES** Information on this subcamp can be found in Dorota Sula, “AL Hartmannsdorf,” in *KL Files from Gross-Rosen: Selected Articles*, ed. Dorota Sula (Wałbrzych: Muzeum Gross-Rosen, 2002); and in Aneta Małeł, *Praca w systemie KL Gross-Rosen* (Wałbrzych: Muzeum Gross-Rosen, 2003).

Additionally, the AMGR holds questionnaires and accounts of former prisoners of this camp.

Aneta Małeł
trans. Gerard Majka

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### HIRSCHBERG (ARBEITSKOMANDO)

Arbeitskommando (Labor Commando) Hirschberg, its official name, was a subcamp of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp.

The camp operated in the town of Hirschberg (present-day Jelenia Góra). It was located approximately 300 to 300 meters (984 to 1,640 feet) from the Zellwolle factory, near the Jewish labor camp, but there was no opportunity for communication between the prisoners incarcerated in these two camps. The camp may have come into being between April 18 and May 6, 1943. At that time the first and probably the last prisoner transport arrived. It held approximately 100 to 110 Polish men, mostly recruited from a large transport of 1,000 prisoners from the Auschwitz concentration camp that had arrived at Gross-Rosen on March 13, 1943. The group included prisoners marked with the following Gross-Rosen concentration camp numbers: 6617, 8386, 8402, 8433, 8464, 8467, 8494, 8495, 8562, 8575, 8576, 8627, 8764, 8773, 8789, 8796, 8797, 8799, 8849, 8891, 8905, 8915, 8916, 8964, and probably numbers 8624 and 8971.

Initially, the number of prisoners did not fluctuate much. We know of individual instances of prisoners being moved to other external Gross-Rosen commands (such as Treskau). Not until the autumn of 1943 was an appreciable group of unidentified prisoners taken away to the main camp.

No instances of suicide, death from natural causes, or murder were recorded throughout the commando’s operation. There were also no epidemics.

SS men comprised the commando staff. The data on camp officials is fragmentary. Lagerführer Alfred Juchelek or Juchelk is mentioned as one of them, although no information about his administration of the camp is available.

Civilian plant employees were put in charge of supervising the commando at work; a considerable percentage of former prisoners stated that these supervisors were kindly disposed toward the laborers.

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The Arbeitskomando did various jobs for the Prix GmbH associated with the expansion of the nearby Schlesische Zellwolle AG synthetic textile plant. These were mostly assembly, construction, and support jobs. Some of the prisoners worked carting in, unloading, and stacking wood, the raw material processed into celluloid fibers in the factory. Another group was put to work stacking and moving the materials produced (heavy—approximately 50-kilogram [110-pound]—bales of rayon).

The last wartime information on the subcamp’s operation dates from January 1944. The prisoners of the closed camp were moved to the main camp at Gross-Rosen.

**SOURCES** This work is based primarily on Bogdan Cybulski, *Obczy podporzadzewan KL Gross-Rosen: Stare badania (Rogóżnica: Państwowe Muzeum Gross-Rosen, 1987)*; as well as Roman Olszyna, *KL Gross-Rosen: Wybór artykułów* (Wałbrzych: Muzeum Gross-Rosen, 2005); and the author’s postwar correspondence with the Celwiskozy plant (formerly Zellwolle) where prisoners worked during the war.

Original camp correspondence preserved in the archive of the AMGR comprises former inmates’ questionnaires.

Gracja Choptiany
trans. Gerard Majka

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### HIRSCHBERG (ARBEITSLAGER)

Arbeitslager (Labor Camp) Hirschberg was one of the many subcamps of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. It came into being in March 1944 (the dates March 1, 12, or 16 occur in the references) when Gross-Rosen headquarters took over a Jewish labor camp under the Organisation Schmeldt, which had been operating since 1942. The camp was located in the town of Hirschberg (present-day Jelenia Góra) on the Bober (Böhr) River near the Zellwolle works.

The camp prisoners were men, mostly Jewish, from various countries of Europe, mainly Poland, Belgium, and the Netherlands. A large group of Hungarian Jews were interned in Hirschberg beginning in mid-1944.

The camp population is estimated to have been from a few hundred to 2,000 prisoners. Prisoners marked with the following Gross-Rosen numbers were interned here or arrived in new transports: 20000 to 20507 (prisoner number 20181 was at the labor camp since October 1942 and was transferred to Gross-Rosen’s administration in March 1944); 35001 to 35480 (starting in May 1944); and 46001 to 46500 (starting in June 1944). Some of the prisoners at the Hirschberg subcamp were sent to Bad Warmbrunn, another Gross-Rosen subcamp situated nearby. Doctors were among the group that was moved.

Former prisoners of the subcamp remember instances of prisoners being murdered by staff members or prisoner-functionaries. They recall the fatal beating of two prisoners by an intoxicated SS man. Another time, an SS man punished a prisoner attempting to escape by whipping, then ordered prisoner-functionaries to torture him to death. The names of
the perpetrators of these crimes have not been established. One victim of the camp terror was the famous Hungarian soccer player Ferenc Moros, who was shot while doing his job and later died in the camp infirmary (Revier). Arnold Mostowicz, also a prisoner at the subcamp, described the event in his memoirs. Alfred Konieczny’s publication, based on surviving original records, reports that the death sentence was carried out at the camp on two Jewish prisoners caught while escaping.¹ They were Ignatz Grossmann (number 49140), born December 20, 1921, and Andor Kiss (number 49224), born December 27, 1913. The prisoners were put to death by hanging. Their fellow prisoners Aspis Matysiak (number 34527) and Sandor Kiszelnik (number 46253) were assigned to carry out the sentence.

Among the characteristic noteworthy camp events remembered by prisoners are the Sunday soccer matches, in which the opponents were the staff members, on the one hand, and a team of prisoners, weak and emaciated by work, on the other. Of course, before being shot, Moros stood out on the prisoners’ team.

Information on the subcamp staff is fragmentary. The only persons mentioned are SS-Oberscharführer Streiholz, serving as Lagerführer, and his assistant (Rapportführer) Franz Wenzel. Some sources call the latter the camp commander, while his assistant was supposed to have been SS-Unterscharführer Pitras (the spelling of the name is uncertain).

The Hirschberg camp prisoners worked in the Zellwolle rayon plant, mainly in the chemical department, processing wood. The work was onerous because of the contact with dangerous acids. Another group of prisoners worked in front of the plant in the coal yard, unloading coal dust. Some prisoners worked for the Askania-Werke company, although the type of work they did is unknown.

Evacuation of the subcamp began in mid-February 1945. The destination was the Buchenwald concentration camp. On March 7, 1945, a group of 900 prisoners arrived there, having been evacuated from the Gross-Rosen subcamp Bolkenhain and Reichenau, as well as from the Auschwitz concentration camp; 78 prisoners from Hirschberg were evacuated in that transport made the journey at first on foot to Reichenau, and from there they were transported in open railroad cars to Buchenwald. More groups of prisoners were probably moved in other transports; for example, a prisoner who had received number 136782 at Buchenwald was not on the list of the transport described above. It cannot be ascertained how many prisoners died during the camp's evacuation.

**SOURCES**


See also ITS, Verzeichnis der Haftstätten unter dem Reichsführer-SS (1933–1945), (Arolsen, 1979, 1:135; “Verzeichnis der Konzentrationslager und ihrer Aussenkommandos gemäss § 42 Abs. 2 BEG,” BGBl. (1977), Teil I, p. 1795; Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945 lists Buchwald-Hohenwiese as a Hirschberg subcamp work detachment, thereby questioning whether Buchwald-Hohenwiese was an independent subcamp; on the other hand, the fact that the prisoners were accommodated on site in Buchwald suggests that it was such a camp.

The subcamp, located in the Prussian province of Lower Silesia or Niederschlesien, Kreis Hirschberg, was, according to a prisoner statement, opened on November 14, 1944. The male prisoners worked in an SS sanatorium for tuberculosis patients, primarily in the laundry and the boiler room, which heated the building.

According to a prisoner statement, the prisoners were evacuated on February 18, 1945, to Hirschberg.

**NOTE**


**HIRSCHBERG**

**BUCHWALD-HOHENWIESE**

There is little information on the Gross-Rosen subcamp Buchwald-Hohenwiese. The encyclopedia Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945 lists Buchwald-Hohenwiese as a Hirschberg subcamp work detachment, thereby questioning whether Buchwald-Hohenwiese was an independent subcamp; on the other hand, the fact that the prisoners were accommodated on site in Buchwald suggests that it was such a camp.

The one and only known prisoner transport arrived at Hochweiler on October 20, 1944, at 9:30 P.M. The women had report of Cwi (Zvi) Rebanic in AMGR, MF-L 124/958; and from “Korespondencj Kierownika Centralnego Urzędu Nordhein-Westfalen do Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce” in AMGR, MF-L 154/Ds./68-25. The transport list from KL Gross-Rosen to KL Buchenwald “Neuzugänge vom 7.03.1945” in AMGR, DP/ 589, was also used.

Grażyna Chopiłińska

**HOCHEWEILER**

Hochweiler was a subcamp of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. It operated during World War II in 1944–1945 in the town of Hochweiler (present-day Wierzchowice). It was located at the site of a former brickyard. The camp belonged to a group of four Gross-Rosen subcamps that came into being in conjunction with the planned Barthold operation (the defense of Lower Silesia against the approaching Soviet army that had been in preparation since August 1944).

The one and only known prisoner transport arrived at Hochweiler on October 20, 1944, at 9:30 P.M. The women had
been brought from the Auschwitz II-Birkenau concentration camp, where 1,000 prisoners had been prepared for transport. The cover letter signed by SS-Hauptsturmführer Mengele accompanying the transport roster said that there were three doctors among the prisoners (Erike Schuessler, Elli Joelson, and Helene Adler) and four nurses. It is also known that later one of the doctors was exchanged with the nearby Kurzbach camp for a dentist prisoner.

As in the two other Gross-Rosen subsidiary camps operating in the Militsch (Milicz) region (Birnbäumel and Kurzbach), Hochweiler held Jewish women. The prisoners received camp numbers probably ranging from 77441 to 78436.

Death rate data from the camp are incomplete: 1 prisoner had already died in the initial period of the camp's existence, that is, October 21 to October 31, 1944. The deaths of 5 more women were recorded through December 20, 1944. After that time, there is no detailed information on the subject. It is known from a camp record that there were 980 female prisoners in camp on January 16, 1945, meaning there were 20 prisoners less than at the start. But it is not known why the number of prisoners dropped. It could have been due to natural deaths, as well as transports of women to other subcamps. There is a surviving list of 78 prisoners unfit to work who were being prepared for transport due to various diseases. General bodily exhaustion and weakness were found in as many as 30 sick women in that group. And a considerable percentage of the prisoners could only be transported lying down. We have to remember that those women had earlier been incarcerated at Auschwitz concentration camp, where such menacing diseases as scarlet fever, diphtheria, and typhus occurred.

Permanent malnutrition was the immediate cause of the Hochweiler prisoners' appalling state of health. A surviving list of the food products needed and scheduled daily menus shows that both the number of meals (two per day), as well as their quality could have been a source of disease and death. For example, the menu for October 23, 1944, called for a first meal of potato soup with some meat, and a supper of bread, butter, and cheese. The weight of the products was not provided in this case. But the menu for November 13, 1944, called for a supper with the following food rations: 300 grams (about 10.6 ounces) of bread, 60 grams (about 2.1 ounces) of fish paste, and 250 grams (about 9 ounces) of potato puree. It seems that they were portions for one person. Meals may have been even more meager in reality.

The women's situation was made worse by camp sanitary conditions and the huge lice infestation, which, according to information from camp officials on January 16, 1945, had affected as many as 60 percent of the 980 prisoners.

The bad sanitary conditions, inadequate food, and hard labor were devastating to the body. The Hochweiler prisoners, like the women at the Birnbäumel and Kurzbach camps, had to work out in the open, digging ditches and raising entrenchments. The work was under the direction of what was called the “Unternehmen Barthold” with its operations headquarters in Kraschnitz township. There is no information on the camp's administration.

As far as the subcamp's evacuation is concerned, some of the prisoners were transported to Bergen-Belsen, where they arrived on February 12, 1945. The number of prisoners who were in that group is unknown. At least two women remained incarcerated in the camp until liberation. They may have been part of a larger group that was not evacuated, or it may have happened by chance.


Additional sources are preserved in the AMGR.

Grażyna Choptianny

trans. Gerard Majka

KAMENZ

In September 1944, the Daimler-Benz GmbH factory in Alsatian Kolmar (French: Colmar) was relocated to eastern Saxony in front of the advancing Allied troops and in accordance with an order of the responsible armaments commission. The Kolmar factory manufactured aircraft parts; its relocation fell under the jurisdiction of the Fighter Staff (Jägerstab), which had been established in March 1944 and was responsible for the repair and maintenance of damaged aircraft factories or their relocation. The relevant order stated: “The Reichsführer-SS will make available sufficient protective custody prisoners for construction and maintenance work... . The order to transfer factories to new areas is to be made by the R.d.L. and the Ob.d.L. Generalmajor together with the Reich Minister for Armaments and War Production.61

The factory relocated to Kamenz was given the name “Elster GmbH” to keep it secret.2

The SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA) Amt III responded to the requests of the company and made available concentration camp prisoners as part of the Jägerstab program. The former chief of personnel at the Kamenz factory, Rudolf Rahmig, had the following to say when questioned about the introduction of concentration camp prisoners to the factory: “The required number of workers was not available at the new location for full production. A solution was soon found. As the Eastern Front got closer, a concentration camp in nearby Liegnitz (Legnica) was dissolved and its inmates transferred to the west. There followed a directive and we found out that we were going to get the concentration camp prisoners. They were accommodated in the Herrenmühle. (Tuchfabrik, Gehr. Noskko & Co., Kamenz, Herrental, Nr. 9). A few days before the prisoners arrived, it was in the last days of October, an advanced detachment appeared to establish the camp. The camp commander was part of the detachment.62

The machines in the cloth factory were dismantled, and camp facilities were established in the three floors of the building. The windows were barred up. The head of personnel,
Rahmig, stated during his interrogation that they had tried to “make the conditions as human as possible” and that “this factory in no way provided satisfactory accommodation for so many people. . . . The cooking vats were insufficient as were the toilets.” His statement was contrary to that of the company’s director, Weist, who tried to make things appear better than they were.

The Kamenz subcamp was established when the transport with the first prisoners arrived at the beginning of November 1944. At the end of December 1944, 116 prisoners arrived from the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. On January 26, 1945, 750 prisoners were sent to Kamenz from the Flossenbürg concentration camp.6

The transport from Flossenbürg had the following nationalities: 232 Russians and other citizens of the Soviet Union; 165 Poles, including 60 Jews; 120 Italians, including 1 Jew; 95 French; 40 Belgians; 32 Germans; 29 Czechs; 10 Hungarians, of whom 6 were Jews; 7 Dutch; 6 Croats; 5 Serbs; 3 Slovaks; 2 Greeks; 2 Austrians; 1 Spaniard; and 2 stateless people.6

The local inhabitants had the following to say about the arrival of the transport: “When the prisoners arrived it was very cold, there was snow on the ground. There were about seven hundred, completely exhausted, hungry and freezing. It was a train of misery and horror, for those who wanted to see. They had no protection from the cold; some of them were bare foot. We scarcely regarded it as possible that a person could survive such conditions. Later another two hundred arrived.”7 When questioned, even the SS camp commander Wilhelm Wirker had to admit the following: “At the end of January or beginning of February 1945, 750 prisoners arrived from Flossenbürg at Weiden. These prisoners were already seriously ill and were in a shocking condition. Eight had died on the transport and they brought them with them.” Wirker attempted to put the causes of death back on to the miserable condition of the prisoners who in January had been transported from Flossenbürg. However, he had obviously counted on deaths and planned the cremation of the corpses in the boiler room of Nosske & Co., as he admitted in his interrogation: “There was a directive to cremate the dead in the closest crematorium. As the closest crematorium was in Dresden the cremations would be awkward. I received from the main camp Gross-Rosen the order to cremate the corpses in the company’s boilers. . . . The prisoners who volunteered as stokers cremated the dead. Rottenführer Kastner was in charge of the cremations. He was also in charge of the infirmary and the doctors. . . . I admit that during my short time at the Kamenz subcamp around one hundred prisoners died and were cremated.”8

The former machinist at the cloth factory had the following to say:

Due to the total war effort the Nosske Tuchfabrik was closed down. Simultaneously I was ordered to August Lesche as a machinist. Shortly before the concentration camp opened at Herrenmühle, I was instructed to go there as the Elster GmbH and August Lesche Company had come to an agreement. I was instructed to make the boilers and heating operational. . . . I went there a few times when the camp was occupied as it was my job to control the boilers, the heating and the machine shop. . . . I learnt that during this period two prisoners had been trained as stokers in the glass works. They were to work in Herrenmühle. . . . A short time later a guard was posted at the entrance to the building and no one was allowed into the camp. The two stokers, whom I knew, had in the meantime been released. They were replaced by the trained prisoners, the Frenchmen P and G, prisoner numbers 80727 and 65891.10

The corpses were cremated just about daily. The smells that lay over the community left no doubt in the minds of the locals, particularly as the transport of corpses into the boiler rooms was noticed. The worker Lehmann stated the following: “A few days after they arrived [the prisoners], we saw prisoners carrying stretchers into the boiler rooms. . . . We saw this many times and there was no doubt in our minds that those who had been tortured to death were being burnt. We later learnt that one corpse was placed on a stretcher, tied down and thrown into the flames. . . . When the camp was to be relocated there were about eighty ill prisoners. They could not be transported. Wirker simply stated: ‘What am I to do with the sick, the fire is out!’ I immediately asked: ‘Have all the dead been cremated?’ Wirker had not expected such a question. He was at a loss for words and left me.”11

The final police report for the Kamenz District Police states that the witness Lode was barred entry when the dead were being cremated. “It was the same for two Kamenz fire fighters. One of them noticed before he left that the dead were in the coal shed under wood wool.”12 A Hungarian SS man Tanner was the only member of the guard who publicly distanced himself from the crimes. In the final police report, it is said that he stated that “the sick and those inmates who could no longer work, were given, on the order of the camp’s doctors, who themselves were prisoners, an injection in the lower arm and thus murdered. They were then cremated. The camp doctors later fled because they no longer wanted to be involved in these crimes, but died during an air raid on Dresden.”13 Tanner put the number of victims who were cremated in the boiler room of the subcamp at 125.14

The Gross-Rosen death register only records 57 deaths.15 Jewish prisoners, Poles, Russians, and Sinti and Roma (Gypsies) are completely missing from these records.

Rapid developments in the war during 1944–1945 kept the death toll from going higher. The expansion of the subterranean production facilities in the nearby caverns, code-named Rüdiger and Rudi, had to stop. As a result, there was no more mass deployment of concentration camp prisoners at these construction sites.16

The prisoners worked in the glassworks and the Minkwitz company. Here, under the supervision of engineers, skilled
tradesmen, and controllers, they disassembled aircraft engines and manufactured and assembled parts. The prisoners often collapsed when carrying the heavy loads. There was inadequate safety, and many accidents resulted due to the prisoners’ weakened state. In addition, the prisoners scarcely had time to eat their sparse midday meal. At the end of each shift, they hurried, driven by the SS, through the city, back to the camp.

In 1945, workers at the Kamenz subcamp could no longer be exchanged for new prisoners. The camp management was forced as a result to give the prisoners a slight increase in rations (60 grams [2 ounces] of bread daily). The physical deterioration of the prisoners could not be halted by the completely inadequate rations and, in individual cases, food secretly given by locals and workers to the prisoners. An eyewitness stated in his memoirs:

Between November 1944 and January 1945 I was a student at the Elster GmbH trade school, a Daimler-Benz factory for the war effort, based on the site of the Kamenz glassworks. We students worked in the workshops and the supply depot. At this time there were many prisoners in the factory. They worked at the machines and did other things. At the beginning of our service we were repeatedly instructed by the engineers from the Elster GmbH that there was to be no contact with the prisoners and that they were not to give them food or anything else. Nevertheless, we found ways to help the very emaciated and exhausted prisoners. We left potatoes, bread, and other food at different places in the workshops, which we had brought from home. We signaled to the prisoners where they could find something. They quickly learnt to understand us. This became more difficult after a while as there were special SS guards who arrived who guarded the prisoners while they were working. The prisoners worked between twelve to fourteen hours a day. The SS were foreigners, in my opinion, from Latvia, Croatia, and other countries. The prisoners were driven to work and beaten. We young ones were pulled out of this area and transferred to another area. However, we were repeatedly successful in hiding food for these hungry people. We used the known secret places.

The camp commander, SS-Oberscharführer Wilhelm Wirker, had a typical SS guard's career behind him. He trained as an SS guard in the SS-Totenkopfbataillon Oranienburg (Death's Head Guard Battalion Oranienburg)/Sachsenhausen concentration camp, where he reached the position of block leader (Blockführer). After service at the front, he served from 1944 at the Vaiwara concentration camp until it was evacuated. In October 1944, he was transferred to the Gross-Rosen concentration camp, where he was then transferred to Kamenz as camp commander. He was tried after the war and was convicted for his role in the crimes committed at the camp. His six accomplices were also convicted.

At the beginning of March 1945, the production site at Kamenz was no longer safe enough for the Daimler-Benz GmbH. The Soviet Army was pressing forward. The company’s management ordered that the factory be pulled back to middle Saxony and Bavaria. The order to evacuate was issued without the slightest regard for the prisoners’ accommodation. The factory manager, Weist, fearing that he would later be held responsible, persuaded the camp commander that the prisoners who had already been sent on the march should return to Kamenz. In the documents at his trial there is the following note: “The logical conclusion for the Elster GmbH is to inform the relevant offices that under these conditions there must be no more use of concentration camp prisoners.” Later he stated:

The factory manager has just been informed by the Dresden Staatspolizei-Leitstelle, that the guards’ commanders at other armaments firms with concentration camp prisoners, to the extent that they come from Flossenb urg, have been ordered, to the extent that it is possible, to avoid marching on the main roads, on their march back to Flossenb urg. The Staatspolizeistelle Dresden also advises that the imminent return of the prisoners under the guards’ commanders is permitted on the basis that, as already noted by the company managers, it is no longer possible under any circumstance to provide accommodation for the concentration camp prisoners at the new camps.

As a return to the Gross-Rosen concentration camp was no longer possible (it had already been evacuated), the prisoners left Kamenz on March 10, 1945, by rail for the Dachau concentration camp. They arrived on March 16, 1945. At least 6 of the 690 prisoners on the transport died in transit.

SOURCES Information on this camp may be found in Hermann Schierz, Seid wachsam. Bericht über das Konzentrationslager Kamenz (Kamenz, 1965).

Archival records are available in the BA-L (IV 405 AR 2261/66; IV 405 AR-Z 198/74, Bd. 1–3); and SUA (KT/OVS, K. 24).

Hans Brenner
trans. Stephen Pallavicini

NOTE

1. SH StA-(D), Auto Union AG, Nr. 666, Bl. 22/23.
2. BA-B, Bank der Deutschen Luftfahrt, 80Ba6, Nr. 703, p. 38.
KITTLITZTREBEN [AKA KRETSCHAMBERG]

A subcamp of Gross-Rosen was located in the town of Kitzlitztreben (later Trzebien). In references, the camp is also called Kretschamberg. The towns of Kitzlitztreben and Kretschamberg (later Karczmarka) were near each other. The prisoners brought to Kitzlitztreben were unloaded at a railroad station in Kretschamberg. Some prisoners remembered that name and mentioned it in later accounts as the place where the camp was located.

The Kitzlitztreben camp was put into operation in late February and early March 1944. Located on the edge of a forest, Kitzlitztreben was a quite large camp. It was made up of eight living barracks, half of which were remnants of a previously closed camp, while the other half were remnants of a former Soviet prisoner-of-war (POW) camp. There were shoemaking and sewing workshops in the camp; the lavatory and infirmary (Revier) were located in separate barracks. The site of the camp was fenced with a triple row of barbed wire. According to Abraham Hendler’s account, the entire forest in which the camp was located was also surrounded by barbed wire.

Approximately 1,700 to 1,800 Jewish men were imprisoned at the Kitzlitztreben camp; they were mainly from Poland and Hungary. There were smaller groups from Germany, Austria, and Belgium. The prisoner holding the post of camp elder (Lagerältester) was German.

The initial prisoner transport arrived at Kitzlitztreben between the end of February and March 13, 1944. The transport brought 200 people, mainly Polish Jews from the closed camp at Sagan. Three more transports that are known of also arrived in March: 180 people from the camp at Grünberg, approximately 200 people from the closed camp at Görlitz, and an unknown number of prisoners from Freiwaldau, which also had been closed. A transport of Jews from Hungary arrived, numbering several hundred prisoners (between 500 and 900), probably in May or early June. The last known transport arrived at Kitzlitztreben on August 15, 1944. It brought approximately 200 Jewish prisoners who had previously been at the Fünfteichen (later Miloszyce) camp, another subsidiary of Gross-Rosen. We know of only one transport leaving Kitzlitztreben: in July 1944, 50 prisoners, almost all of them metalworkers, were sent to the Gross-Rosen subcamp at Bunzlau. The death rate in Kitzlitztreben was high, especially in the initial stage of its operation. Hendler stated that 230 of the 900 prisoners in the camp died within two weeks. That was because of the wretched sanitary conditions, the huge shortage of even cold water (for the longest time, there was only one faucet, which all the prisoners used), the bad living conditions (the prisoners were put in unfinished and unheated barracks), and the tremendous terror rampant at the camp. According to Armin Freudmann’s account, the camp was inspected by the labor service (Arbeitsdienst) at some point in time, the result of which was somewhat improved prisoners’ living conditions.

Two doctors and three orderlies, all of whom were prisoners, worked at the camp hospital. One of the doctors was named Braun. They were very limited in what they could do to help sick prisoners. The Jewish doctors were powerless in the face of German orders and the shortage of medicine and medical instruments. The prisoners remembered an accident at work when a prisoner’s leg was crushed. Amputation was necessary; it was done without anesthesia and, because there were no surgical instruments, with an ordinary saw.

Besides the hospital, the camp had what was called the care barrack. Prisoners who were convalescing after their illnesses could rest for almost 14 days in that barrack, until they were able to start working again. Prisoners who were found to be unfit for work were taken away from the camp.

Freudmann remembered two unsuccessful escape attempts at the camp. One of the intercepted fugitives was hanged right away at Kitzlitztreben, while the other was taken to the main camp at Gross-Rosen and murdered there. What is unusual is that approximately 50 prisoners also were sent to Gross-Rosen along with the condemned man and were present at the execution. Upon returning to Kitzlitztreben, they
had to tell the other prisoners at roll call all about the execution.

The commander’s name and the other camp staff member names are unknown. However, it is known that Kittlitztreben was guarded by Luftwaffe soldiers.

Initially the prisoners worked expanding and setting up their own camp. Later they worked in various areas of the huge construction project the Luftwaffe was building in the forest around the camp. They cleared trees and built railroad tracks, concrete roads, ammunition depot bunkers, and barracks for the Luftwaffe soldiers. They worked in transport commandos: they carted the wood cleared from the forest and transported and stacked crates of ammunition in the depot bunkers that had been built. Records from the archives of the International Tracing Service (ITS), Arolsen, show that the prisoners also made aircraft parts. We know of 18 companies that employed the prisoners: Grüßlich, Flübsch, Kodler, Konrad, Krause, Kün- gals, Kunnith, Leistikoff, Madebrun, Mischke, Poikett, Reink- ers, Schulz, Tiessler, Wiedermann, Zimke, Peuke und Jech, and Stein und Teer.8

In early 1945, the camp headquarters began evacuation preparations. A selection was conducted of the prisoners in the hospital, after which some of the patients were escorted to the assembly ground and ordered to exercise with the rest of the prisoners in order to improve their condition and endurance in the march. The weak prisoners who could not stand up to the pace were beaten severely and left unconscious on the drilling ground. Only in the evening were they taken back to the hospital. The prisoners were horror-struck at such evacuation preparations. The most active of them, approximately 30 people, organized and began their own preparations for the upcoming events. They hid some of their work tools, which they were going to use as necessary to defend themselves if the evacuation was ordered late enough that they would have a chance of surviving until the Russians came. They also prepared for the possibility that power to the camp and, what was most important, the fence would be cut. Unfortunately, the evacuation was ordered suddenly on the morning of February 9. The prisoners did not know how far away the advancing army was, so they did not go through with their plan of defense.9 Several hundred of the most ill were left in the hospital. Freudmann says that headquarters had the order to blow the camp up, along with the sick people. But the camp leader (Lagerführer) was reported to have said: “Let’s give the Russians the 300 cripples as a present.” Soviet soldiers took them away on February 10 or 11.

The almost 1,000 prisoners who were deemed healthy began their march southward under terrible conditions. Some of the prisoners had not given up the plan to avoid evacuation and tried to escape. We know that Jakub Rettman was successful.

We do not know the exact evacuation route. All we know is that the column passed through Görlitz, where several dozen sick prisoners were left. The next point they reached was the Gross-Rosen subcamp at Zittau. A certain percentage of prisoners were left there, too. We do not know how many there were in that group. Based on Natan Klajman’s account, we can suppose that it was not just the totally exhausted prisoners and those unable to continue marching who stayed at Zittau; Klajman and other prisoners in that group (along with the 300 other Jewish prisoners already there) were sent to work at the local aircraft factory. That group was liberated on May 9, 1945.

The last group of Kittlitztreben prisoners reached the Buchenwald concentration camp only on April 4, 1945.10

SOURCES Certain information on the Kittlitztreben subcamp can be found in Bogdan Cybulski, Obozy podporządkowane Gross-Rosen (stan badanych) (Wałbrzych, 1987). Accounts and memoirs of former prisoners can be found in the following archives: AMGR in Wałbrzych, AZIH in Warsaw, and YV in Jerusalem. Documents concerning the evacuation as well as companies employing Kittlitztreben prisoners are kept in the ITS archives in Arolsen.

Danuta Sawicka
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES

1. AZIH, Account No. 1692, Abraham Borger, and Account No. 919, Abraham Hendler; YVA, 02/643, account of Armin Freudmann.
2. AZIH, Account No. 710, Jakub Rettman.
3. AZIH, Account No. 2765, Natan Klajman.
4. AMGR, 7630/DP-A, Józef Mann’s questionnaire.
5. AZIH, Account No. 935, Symcha Kościak.
6. AZIH, Account No. 919.
7. AZIH, Account No. 710.
8. ITS, Kittlitztreben Camp Records.
9. AZIH, Account No. 710.
10. AZIH, Account No. 2765; ITS, Buchenwald Concentration Camp Records.

KRATZAU

The Kratzau I and II camps were created in the city of Kratzau (Chrastava) by Organisation Schmelt in 1943 to supply workers for the Tannwald Textile Works and the Deutsche Industriewerke AG ammunition factory.1 Only in October 1944 did Gross-Rosen take them over as subcamps.

Alfred Konieczny established that the Kratzau I subcamp was located in a four-story building with no windows or sanitary facilities. One account states, though, that the Kratzau I camp was located in four wooden barracks surrounded by a double fence supported by approximately 20 posts, next to the factory.2 The camp was set up on the model of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. It had an assembly area, also fenced with electrified barbed wire, which SS men guarded.

There are no precise data concerning the prisoners who were already at Kratzau I when Gross-Rosen took over management of the camp. The female prisoners brought to Kratzau I from Auschwitz in October 1944 had undergone a prior selection. The first transport consisted of 100 persons,
who were numbered from 75901 to 76000. The second transport that reached the subcamp brought 200 women, identified by numbers from the series 83000–83200. As part of the evacuation of Gross-Rosen’s subcamps for women, some women prisoners were sent to Kratzau from Bernsdorf and Gebhardsdorf and perhaps from others. As a result, the women’s population grew to approximately 1,000, even though the Gebhardsdorf group had been taken away.

The camp included Polish, Czech, French, Belgian, Dutch, and Danish women. These women worked in several plants. Divided into three groups, one group was assigned to work manufacturing ammunition at Deutsche Industriewerke AG; a second group worked at the Tannwald company; and a third group worked making gas masks at the Tolex company, a division of the Spreewerke GmbH concern of Berlin. Some 500 women were working there in November 1944, but an increase to 1,000 people was planned.

The women’s work in the gas mask factory was tolerable (they also ate dinner at the factory), while the hard 12 hours of work at the ammunition factory was made more intolerable by the German foremen working there. They beat the girls, taking as an example the “educational” methods used by the camp’s female commander, Dinner. A foreman often chose only the weakest women to lift heavy crates.

In a description of her experience at Kratzau I, a former prisoner stated: “The food was barely sufficient, so I reported for shoemaking work. You got a double serving of soup for that job.”

The situation at the subcamp began to deteriorate as a result of admitting women from other Gross-Rosen camps. Hunger was prevalent, and the camp was very dirty. There was not enough clothing for the newly arrived women from Auschwitz.

Dr. Mengele, a doctor from Auschwitz concentration camp, arrived at the women’s camp in October 1944 to conduct a selection. He made subsequent visits on January 20, 1945, and March 20, 1945. After such a selection, the group of women chosen would be sent to the Zittau subcamp.

The doctor at Kratzau I was a Polish woman, Dr. Janina Węgrynowska of Warsaw (approximately 45 to 46 years old). She was taken away from the camp upon the commander’s intervention.

The director of the Tannwald factory was Hugo Wilm, who was charged after the war with giving two Soviet prisoners of war (POWs) over to the Germans. He was acquitted due to a lack of evidence.

The following details about the camp are given in one source:

Toward the end of the war, entire families of various nationalities were also brought there (to the camp), as well as Polish children who were separated from their parents, and they were lodged separately. They had to work; they were brutally treated.

As in all the camps put under Gross-Rosen’s command in 1944, prisoners worked in their own civilian clothes. The conditions there were unsanitary. There was no running water; water was carted in from the nearby Nysa [Neisse] river, so it was rationed sparingly. Not only drinking water was in short supply, so was water for laundry and washing. Lice infestation and scabies were rampant.

All we know about the children in the camp is that they were assigned to cleanup jobs and to weeding the pathways, sweeping the sidewalks, and removing trash. Witness Zenon Lis, who was a child when he was in the camp, related the following: “We were treated harshly for children, always brutally driven, sometimes shoved about by the people supervising us, German-speaking men and women. The rooms in the barracks were very primitive; there were no sanitary facilities or washbasins. . . . Prisoners built the outdoor latrines. The food was poor and varied at different times: black coffee, dry bread, rutabaga soup, a potato on rare occasions, and a piece of liverwurst on exceptional ones. The children may not have minded the shortages as much, because their parents, and sometimes strangers as well tried to help to a very modest extent.” Approximately 40 children aged up to 14 were in the camp.

One day when they got back from work, the women saw the guard women putting piles of wood around the building. As it later turned out, they were unsuccessful in destroying the camp; liberation had begun.

The commander and Aufseher (overseer) fled the camp in early May 1945. Only the woman in charge of the kitchen, two SS men, and 10 women guards remained.

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The civilian who told the prisoners they were free recommended that they stay in the camp until the Soviet Army entered. They listened to him. The soldiers handed out cans of food to them, also warning them not to eat fatty foods because of their poor health. Despite the warnings, there were cases of dysentery and other diseases. Consequently, a quarantine was imposed, and an order forbidding anyone to leave the camp was issued.

According to B. Zimmerman’s account, Camp Commander Dinner was a person who would torment the prisoners by doing things like not letting them wash, and if she found an undressed woman washing herself, she immediately punished her with a whipping. The camp commander “was about 45 years old, she was a good-looking woman, she always had a whip with her . . . she said that the only educational method was a good whipping. She whipped people in inhuman fashion.”

There was a woman camp leader (Lagerführerin) in autumn 1944; later there was a man. Some of the staff were arrested in May 1945. The Lagerführer was probably shot. No information is available on the staff trials.

The camp staff was composed of 4 SS men and 10 SS women (they were German women from the Czech Sudeten area). Several staff names and a few details about them have been established:

- Maria Kraus née Hradec (born April 25, 1923). She was wanted after the war.11
- Someone named Paul Oswald Thiemann (born December 18, 1897) was an SS-Rottenführer at Kratzau starting July 1944. He was tried in Poland after the war. The verdict is not available.12
- Elza Hemmrich—Lagerführerin, SS member.
- Adela Pelz—Blockführerin, SS member.
- Berta Sommer—Administration Department, SS member.


The trial materials of the aforementioned staff members could not be found. The staff information might also apply to the Kratzau II camp.


NOTES
1. AMGR, DP 8751, correspondence of R. Olszyna; AZIH, Account No. 271.
2. AMGR, DP 8751, correspondence of R. Olszyna.
4. AMGR, DP 2829.
5. AMGR, MF 124/2139, account of Nela Liphart.
6. AMGR, XLIII/2.
7. AMGR, Kowalczyk
8. Ibid.
9. AMGR, MF/549602, account of B. Zimmerman.
10. AMGR, DP-A 3474, questionnaire of Zenon Lis.
11. AMGR, XLIII/1, Records of investigation located at the OKBZHW.
12. APMO, 27, List of Auschwitz concentration camp staff members tried in Poland after the war; (Trial Materials, Materials Catalog No./589); AK-IPN, 1,14,25 (Ur.: SS-Rottenführer, KL Auschwitz: 1940–1945; List of Auschwitz concentration camp staff members; Polish Army Mission records; PMW-BZW/171, k.228); AK-IPN (Paul Oswald Thiemann’s other personal data is from the indictment dated December 20, 1947, in the trial of Walter Palinsky and associates, and SOWd-140, pp. 40–43, 77–86).
13. AMGR, DP 8751, Olszyna materials.

KRATZAU II

The Kratzau II camp was taken over by Gross-Rosen in the autumn of 1944. The camp accommodated approximately 150 Jewish women of French, Hungarian, and Greek origin.

The subcamp was located outside the village of Klein Schönau (Malý Šenov). The first mention of its existence is dated October 28, 1944. A 150-person transport from Auschwitz II-Birkenau concentration camp arrived there around that date. The female prisoners in the transport were numbered in the series from 86201 to 86350. The women were put in the mill because it was the only building with large-enough rooms.

The Kratzau II camp probably accommodated only sick prisoners. A list made by the International Tracing Service (ITS) contains no information about the women working. However, the name Tannwald Textilien Werke and the type of manufacturing it did—antigas protective equipment (Gas-Schutzgeräte)—appear next to Kratzau II in a document dated November 18, 1944. The number of women who appear to have worked there was 150, and an increase to 500 was planned.
A former prisoner's account corroborates the supposition that the camp was only for sick women, as she says that the death rate was very high there, because someone died there every day and the prisoners themselves would bury the dead by the cemetery wall. Regarding the disposal of the bodies of dead women, another account informs us that the bodies were carted off to be cremated at a camp in Weiss Kirchen an der Neisse (later Bily Kostel nad Nisou).

The supposition regarding the nature of the camp might also be corroborated by information that selections were frequently conducted at the Kratzau I subcamp, and the sick were taken away from the camp. That could be the reason for setting up a separate camp nearby (Kratzau II) for those unable to work. By analogy, that is what happened in places such as the Riese Dörnhau camp.

All we know about conditions in the camp is that lice infestation was rampant and that prisoners worked washing dirty laundry in the Waschraum. As indicated in one account: “The camp was closed and lice-infested; the Dutch women were afraid of [bugs], their bodies were bitten up by insects. The camp was in a mill. The beds were triple-deckers.”

Two reports provide us with information that dental procedures were performed in this camp; they record that from February 2 to February 27, 1945, prisoners were seen by Romana Silberschlag (camp no. 53948), the prisoner serving as the dentist at that time.

Several days before liberation, the Dutch Red Cross sent food assistance. However, it may have been sent to Kratzau I or Kratzau II or to both camps.

The Aufseherinnen (SS women guard auxiliaries) and camp leader (Lagerführer) fled just before the Soviet Army entered the camp. Only a guard remained. The detachment leader (Kommandoführer) told the women that they would be liberated in a few days. Before she left, she gave a final command to clean the dirty toilet. A Soviet soldier announced that they were free, after which the barbed wires were cut, and the camp celebrated. Also, the camp warehouse loaded with huge amounts of food was knocked down. That information came from accounts by former prisoners. The same accounts say that for a time the women hid in the Aufseherinnen’s room from the Russians, who raped women.

After a few days spent in the camp after liberation, the Czechs told the women to go to the train station. The train trip was not long; they had to get off for unknown reasons and continue their journey on foot through the forest. After much tribulation, they finally reached Łódź.

The information on the staff provided in the entry on Gross-Rosen/Kratzau I might also apply to the Kratzau II camp. There is no accurate information, so we cannot determine which people were assigned to either camp.


Archival material on this camp is scant. Recollections and surveys of former prisoners can be found at the AMGR.

Katarzyna Pawlak-Weiss

**NOTES**

1. A. Małek, “Praca w filiach KL Gross-Rosen” (unpub. MSS).
2. AMGR, DP 2829.
3. AMGR, 154/N, Frydla Kryger.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

**KURZBACH**

The Kurzbach subcamp of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp operated in 1944–1945 in the town of Kurzbach (present-day Bukołowo) and was located in some of the buildings on the estate of Prince von Hatzfeld (the sheepfold and pigsty, where, incidentally, the hospital for sick prisoners was set up).

It is probable that the subcamp came into being in late October 1944, although there are no documents to confirm that date definitely.

As was the case with the other camps formed in the region, the purpose of this one was to do work associated with the Barthold Operation (Unternehmen Barthold), that is, the construction of fortifications in Lower Silesia for defense against the approaching Soviet Army. To carry out these plans, 1,000 female prisoners were brought in from the Auschwitz concentration camp; they were marked with numbers beginning with 79501. The women were Jewish.

In the opinion of forced laborers working or living in the vicinity of the camp, the Kurzbach prisoners appeared haggard and beset by hunger, as they often begged for food. However, obtaining extra food that way was severely punished. Witnesses say that it was exactly this hunger that devastated the body and resulted in numerous deaths. The number of mortalities has not been established. Dead prisoners were most frequently buried at night in the nearby woods. Witnesses also recall instances of killing. They think that six or seven people were murdered. An investigation into the matter by the Zielona Góra District Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes came up with neither the names of the perpetrators nor the victims.

The Kurzbach labor camp prisoners did murderously hard jobs (cutting down trees, digging ditches) called for by the Unternehmen Barthold and its Einsatzstab Kraschitz.

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The SS oversaw the camp, and the Organisation Todt (OT) supervised the prisoners’ work. The management staff was made up of men and women.

The subcamp’s evacuation began in late January 1945, when 200 to 500 women were escorted out. The sick and weak were escorted out later. Those who were unfit to march were killed.

The camp’s prisoners were evacuated to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. The number of women who completed the journey and reached its destination has not been determined.

**SOURCES**
This work is based primarily on Bogdan Cybulski, *Obozy podporządkowane KL Gross- Rosen (stan badan)* (Rogoźnica: Państwowe Muzeum Gross-Rosen, 1987); Isabell Sprenger, *Gross-Rosen: Ein Konzentrationslager in Schlesien* (Cologne: Böhla, 1994); and Alfred Konieczny, *“Kobiety w obozie Gross-Rosen: Ein Konzentrationslager in Schlesien“* (Cologne: Böhla, 1994), and Alfred Konieczny, *“Kobiety w obozie Gross-Rosen: Ein Konzentrationslager in Schlesien“* (Cologne: Böhla, 1994). Sources used were minutes of witness interrogations as well as reports from the investigation conducted on the camps and on crimes committed in 1944–1945 in the town of Sieczko and Bukolewo. This material, which was acquired from the OKRZIH, is located in the archives of the AMGR, Catalog No. DP/6500.

**LANDESHUT**

The Gross-Rosen subcamp at Landeshut was put into operation in July 1944 in a suburb of Landeshut (later Kamienna Góra) to provide the labor force for the roller and ball bearing manufacturing works moved there from Schweinfurt, which was threatened by Allied air raids. The decision to move the plant was made by the Reich Air Ministry (RLM) in May 1943 and concerned the Kugelfischer and Vereinigte Kugellager-Fabriken plants, which were given use of the production halls of the local Kramst, Methner and Frahne und Leinag AG textile plants in Landeshut. The adaptation work that had to be completed was done by such people as prisoners from the Organisation Schmidt forced labor camp for Jews (ZALfJ) that was established at that time; the prisoners were then incorporated into the manufacturing process. The ZALfJ was closed in April 1944 due to a typhus epidemic, after which the plants sought Gross-Rosen concentration camp prisoners for labor.

The initial group of prisoners, numbering over 300, was sent to Landeshut on July 16, 1944; they were selected from recently arrived transports of prisoners from Warsaw (Pawiak prison), Białystok, and Lomża. A second group arrived in early August, and a third group of prisoners arrived in mid-September (including many from the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising). Afterward, only small groups would arrive to make up for losses due to death or disability, such as a 50-person group of Polish children from the Auschwitz concentration camp. A group of Jewish prisoners from the evacuated Auschwitz Gleiwitz subcamp arrived in late January 1945. A total of approximately 1,500 prisoners were sent to Landeshut, of whom Poles definitely predominated (over 80 percent), followed by Soviet citizens (approximately 15 percent) and small groups of Croats, Czechs, Frenchmen, and Germans. The prisoners were housed in four brick barracks with two levels; a fifth barrack was also occupied toward the end of the camp’s existence. The camp was surrounded by a barbed-wire fence and guarded by a detachment of SS men from the Gross-Rosen Guard Battalion 11th Company.

SS-Hauptscharführer Alfons Gross became the camp leader (Lagerführer) at Landeshut, and his assistant was SS-Oberscharführer Johann Metzner. SS-Oberscharführer Herbert Hank became the new camp leader at the turn of the year from 1944 to 1945. The “prisoner government” was headed by camp elder (Lagerältester) Richard Peter, previously a block elder at Gross-Rosen; the block elders were Stanisław Kowalski, Gottlieb Adam, Tomasz Piluński, Marian Kosmida, Zygmunt Pietrzak, Paweł Proksa, and Hieronim Furmanek. Stanisław Lebiiedyński became the doctor in the infirmary.

Besides some small camp support (kitchen, laundry, infirmary) and construction commandos, the prisoners worked in two shifts in the plants, making ball bearings. The SS men escorted them to the workplace and took them back to the camp as well. They worked in three separate plants, named Werk I, Werk II, and Werk III, under the supervision of Kapos and German foremen. Otto Dicke headed the group of Kapos and was aided in persecuting and abusing the prisoners by German criminal prisoners Zappe and Karl Regel, as well as Poles Henryk Iwanowski and Teodor Szulc. Werk I did the preliminary processing of the bearing rings, cutting, grinding, and pretempering them. Werk II assembled the bearings and did the quality control and shipping. The work was the hardest at Werk III, put into operation in the autumn of 1944: at large electrical furnaces the rings were punched out for further processing. The labor in the factory quickly exhausted the prisoners’ strength, also aided by the starvation food rations. They soon became emaciated and fell ill with various diseases. The infirmary did not have the medicine it needed, and many of the prisoners died. The bodies of the deceased were sent to the crematorium at the main camp up until the evacuation of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp in February 1945, after which they were buried in Landeshut in the Jewish cemetery.

Some determined prisoners made several attempts to escape. The first successful one, as early as August 24, 1944, was by two Russians; there was another attempt by three Russians on September 23. Apprehended fugitive Piotr Garceżyński was hung on the assembly grounds to intimidate the prisoners; the others were sent back to Gross-Rosen and put into a penal company.

When the next Red Army set off on another offensive in Lower Silesia on February 8, 1944, the Landeshut region was suddenly in the zone threatened by the frontline operations. The camp command ordered the evacuation of all prisoners...
able to march; the sick and exhausted were allowed to stay at the camp. On February 14, the evacuation column set off toward Hirschberg (Jelena Góra), but it stopped after having traveled over 19 kilometers (12 miles) and was ordered back to the Landeshut camp. There, the people who had stayed behind were accused of aiding the Communists and destroying camp facilities; they were formed into a penal company that the SS men and prisoner-functionaries subjected to a “bloody Friday” on February 16; tens of people were killed or shot during the massacre and during punitive labor at Werk III the next day.

The prisoners were not sent to work until late February, as the plants had been evacuated. The camp provisioning had degenerated considerably, and the number of emaciated people quickly rose, as did the prisoner death rate. In March and April 1945, the authorities started forcing the prisoners to build antitank ditches near Liebau (Łubawa), which for the starving people was often more than their strength could bear; the work lasted until early May. The prisoner-functionaries and SS men left the camp the night of May 8; the camp was liberated by detachments of the Soviet 21st Army the next morning.

Bodies were exhumed from three mass graves at the Jewish cemetery in Landeshut on April 11, 1946; the remains of 107 prisoners were dug up, some with evident skull injuries and gunshot holes. The Polish courts tried some of the Landeshut prisoner-functionaries: on September 16, 1946, the Katowice Special Criminal Court sentenced block elder Marian Kośmida to death; on August 31, 1948, the Jelenia Góra District Court sentenced Kapo Henryk Iwanowski to death; on August 9, 1949, the Białystok District Court sentenced assistant Kapo Władysław Rogowski to six years in prison; and on August 23, 1948, the Kraków District Court sentenced Władysław Mleczko, Barrack I scribe (Blockschreiber) and briefly block elder, to three years in prison.

SOURCES

There are no publications that deal directly with this camp; some information is available in the broader publications on Gross-Rosen. Primary sources are available in the AMGR.

Alfred Konieczny

LANGENBIELAU I [AKA REICHENBACH, REICHENBACH SPORTSCHULE]

The Gross-Rosen subcamp Langenbielau I was located in the Prussian province of Lower Silesia (Niederschlesien), in what is present-day Bielawa, about 60 kilometers (37 miles) to the south of Breslau (Wrocław). That the camp had two names is due to the fact that the accommodation barracks were located between the villages of Langenbielau and Reichenbach. The buildings were part of the former SA-Sports School—thus the origin of the camp’s name Reichenbach Sportschule.

Forced labor camps were located in the area around Breslau in Upper and Lower Silesia and some in the Sudetenland as early as 1940, to hold the local Jewish population. Under the command of Albrecht Schmelt, the Sonderbeauftragter (special commissioner) of the RFSS und Chef der deutschen Polizei für den fremdvölkischen Arbeitseinsatz im Osten (Chief of German Police for the Employment of Foreign Labor in the East), the inmates of these camps that were part of the Organisation Schmelt worked primarily in textile industries that supplied the Wehrmacht. In 1942, an Organisation Schmelt camp was established in Langenbielau. In the autumn of 1944, it came under the control of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp as a subcamp. The prisoners’ living conditions sharply deteriorated with this change in command: according to Monika Schmidt, who has described the camp in the Dachauer Hefte, the women in the forced labor camp were selected, and the men were mistreated.

According to Schmidt, the camp Langenbielau I consisted of sections: the men’s camp, or Männerlager I, and the women’s camp, or Frauenlager I. Between the end of August and the beginning of September 1944, the SS had taken over the former Reichenbach Sports School and, with the labor of Jews from the forced labor camp in Faulbrück, converted it into a concentration camp. The Langenbielau I camp for men consisted of eight two-level barracks, and the camp for women, which was only a few meters away, consisted of six barracks. The buildings were surrounded by a 3-meter-high (almost 10-feet-high) electrified fence, and there were 5-meter-high (16.4-feet-high) guard towers.

There were around 2,000 prisoners in the camp for men; the first inmates were from the dissolved forced labor camp (ZAL) in Faulbrück, and they arrived in Langenbielau on October 17 and 25, 1944. At the end of October, another transport arrived with 200 prisoners from the Krakau-Plaszow camp. Details on the age and national origin of the male prisoners have not been referred to in the secondary literature. The death rate in the men’s camp has been described as high, with the prisoners suffering mostly from lung diseases. The death rate is said to have been 3 or 4 prisoners per day.

The camp commander for the Langenbielau I men’s camp, which was also the site of the camp offices for the other camps in Langenbielau and Peterswaldau, was SS-Obersturmführer Karl Ulbricht, who had previously been commander of the guards at the Luhlin-Majdanek concentration camp. The Rapportführer was Martin Klütsch. The camp was guarded by roughly 150 SS guards, of whom only a few are known by name: Richard Dietrich, Max Grimm, and Koppelmann (or Koppmann). Blockführer Helmut Schulze was known to the prisoners as Joine (der Bösartige, or “The Vicious One”).

The women’s camp Langenbielau I held around 400 prisoners when it was taken over by the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. They were given prisoner numbers 49501 to 49898. Around 200 of these women had arrived in Langenbielau a few weeks earlier, following the dissolution of forced labor camps at Gellenau. A quarter of the women were between ages 13 and 18; a third were between 19 and 23. Additional arrivals increased the numbers of prisoners to around 800. It is likely that the numbers were even higher. Most of the
women were Hungarian and Polish Jews. Hans de Vries states
that there was also a group of Dutch prisoners in Langenbielau (probably Langenbielau I): 450 of these prisoners, mostly
women, were deported in June 1944 from Herzogenbusch to
Auschwitz and then were sent on to Langenbielau/Reichen-
bach. Only 160 (male and female) inmates of this so-called
Philips Group survived.

The women slept in unheated barracks on straw; details on
the death rate in the female camp have not survived, but ac-
cording to Schmidt, relying on eyewitness statements, the
prisoners were mistreated by the guards, roll calls lasted for
hours, and at least one female prisoner was shot in a forest
near the camp. As in the men’s camp, prisoners from the
women’s camp who were no longer capable of working were
sent to Auschwitz or to the Dörnhau subcamp, a so-called
death camp (Sterbelager). From September 1944, the women’s
camp was used to train wardresses for the Gross-Rosen camp;
the women were armed with cudgels and whips, and the use of
dogs was planned. Schmidt states that around 40 to 50 ward-
resses were in charge of the prisoners in the women’s camp.
Lieselotte Reiche is named as the commander of this camp.
The name of another wardress, Charlotte Hilscher, is known,
as are the names of 3 women who worked in the prison admin-
istration: Erika König, Maria Kühnel, and Helena Wiltzdorf.

The male prisoners as well as the female prisoners worked
at a number of local firms, probably as a continuation of the
work done for the Organisation Schmelt. Often, the male
prisoners worked in armaments production or on construc-
tion sites after the transfer of control of the camp to Gross-
Rosen. Little is known about the cultural life in the camp. Bella
Gutterman has revealed that at the beginning of 1945 the
Jewish prisoners celebrated Passover in Langenbielau. The
male prisoners burned some of their beds to bake matzoh.
The celebration occurred in the Langenbielau I women’s
camp.

On February 18, 1945, some of the female prisoners were
evacuated to Porta Westfalica, a Neuengamme subcamp, and
others to Parschnitz. In March 1945, 432 male prisoners were
probably taken to Dachau. Of those, it is thought that only
240 reached their destination. However, there was not a full-
scale evacuation of the camp. It was liberated by Soviet troops
on May 8, 1945.

Klütsch and Schulze were sentenced to death in Poland in
1948 and hanged.

**Sources**

Monika Schmidt reconstructions everyday life in the
camp Langenbielau I in her essay “Zwangsarbeit und Lager-
haft als lebenslanges Trauma. Erfahrungen in Langenbielau
based on witness statements, and the description is necessar-
ily fragmentary. Alfred Konieczny, Frauen im Konzentrations-
lager Gross-Rosen in den Jahren 1944–1945 (Waltbrzych:
Państwowe Muzeum Gross-Rosen, 1994), describes the
“Frauenarbeitslager” Langenbielau on pp. 21–25 and on p. 23
deals with the use of the names “Langenbielau” and “Reichen-
bach.” Bella Gutterman in her essay “Der Alltag der jüdischen
Häftlinge in Nebenlagern des KL Gross-Rosen im Lichte
ihrer kulturellen und künstlerischen Tätigkeit,” in Die Völker
Europas im KL Gross-Rosen, ed. Alfred Konieczny (Waltbrzych:
Państwowe Muzeum Gross-Rosen, 1995), pp. 37–58, on p. 57
relates the preparation and celebration of Passover by the
Jewish prisoners in the Reichenbach camp [aka Frauenlager
Langenbielau I]. Hans-Werner Wollenberg, one of the doc-
tors in the men’s camp, wrote a memoir: . . . und der Alptraum
war de zum Alltag. Autobiographischer Bericht eines Jüdischen
156–87 he deals with his time in Langenbielau. Hans de Vries
describes the fate of the Jewish prisoners in the Langenbielau
I subcamp in his “Holländische Staatsbürger im KL Gross-
Rosen,” in Konieczny, Die Völker Europas im KL Gross-
Rosen, pp. 85–90.

The GKBZHwP’s Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich
et al. (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1979),
refers to the camp on p. 429 as an independent subcamp under
the name Reichenbach but without any reference to Langen-
bielau I.

The ITS, Verzeichnis der Haftstätten unter dem Reichsführer-
SS (1933–1945) (Arolsen, 1979), 1:139, states that the Langen-
bielau I subcamp was also known as the Reichenbach
Sportschule. The “Verzeichnis der Konzentrationslager und
ihrer Aussenkommandos gemäss § 42 Abs 2 BEG,” BGBl.
(1977), Teil I, p. 1835, lists the Reichenbach camp under the
name Langenbielau.

The BA-L, under Signatures ZdL 405 AR 2797/67 IV and
ZdL 405 AR-Z 11/62 II holds files on the proceedings against
the camp commander of Langenbielau I, II, and Peterswal-
dau, SS-Obersturmführer Karl Ulbrich. BA-L, ZdL 205 AR
1018/63, contains witness statements regarding the Langen-
bielau subcamp; collection ZdL 405 AR 1663/66 comprises
files from the proceedings against Helmut Schulze. Witness
statements on Langenbielau I are also held in the archives of
AMGR, the ZfA in Berlin, the AZIH in Warsaw, the YVA in
Israel, and the USHMM in Washington, DC. Files from the
trial of SS and wardresses are held in the GKBZHwP in War-
saw, collections SOSW 125 (proceedings against Martin
Klütsch) and SOSW 6 (proceedings against Gertrud G.).
Further information can be found in the collections of the
BA-B, NS 3/1570 (Angaben zu Aufseherinnen), NS 4 Bu 99
(Gross-Rosen aus Ausbildungsort für Aufseherinnen), and
NS 4 GR vorl. (Gross-Rosen).

Evelyn Zegenhagen
trans. Stephen Pallavicini

**Langenbielau II**

The Gross-Rosen subcamp Langenbielau II was located in
Langenbielau (present-day Bielawa). The subcamp was for
female prisoners. As with the women’s camp in Peterswaldau, it
was administered from the male camp at Langenbielau I.

Unlike the camp at Langenbielau I (which was also known
as Reichenbach or Reichenbach Sportschule), there are few
details known about the camp at Langenbielau II. Also,
Langenbielau II did not originate from the Organisation Schmelz. It probably originated, as with other Gross-Rosen subcamps, as a result of the arrival of prisoner transports from Hungary, Slovakia, Krakau-Plaszow, and Litzmannstadt (Łódź). Many of these transports went through a selection in Auschwitz before the prisoners were distributed to the new subcamps. According to statements by former prisoners, it would seem that the women were taken to the Langenbielau II subcamp up to April 1945. Women who could not work were regularly returned to Auschwitz.

The International Tracing Service (ITS), relying on a prisoner statement, reports that the Langenbielau II camp was mentioned for the first time in February 1945. The women, according to the ITS, worked for the companies Lehmann and G.F. Flechtnr (the Lehmann company had taken over part of the Flechtnr factory). Details on their work are not known. The women slept in barracks next to their work. The female SS guards in the camp were under the command of Elisabeth Knauer, who joined the SS-Gefolge (Auxiliary) at the age of 23 in March 1944. At least one SS wardress was to be trained to lead a dog squad. In response to statements about the completely unhygienic sanitary conditions and the frequent epidemics among the prisoners, including typhus, Knauer is alleged to have said: “They should croak!” The death rate is said to have been high, but there are no details.

The Bielawa city administration has information that suggests a number of around 1,000 Silesian Jewish women in Langenbielau II who, from mid-1944, worked for the Frolich Spinning company. It is likely that this information confuses the women's camp with Langenbielau I.

The prisoners were liberated by the Red Army on May 8, 1945.

NOTES

LIEBAU

The Gross-Rosen subcamp at Liebau (later Lubawka) was located approximately 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) south of Landeshut (Kamienna Góra).

From the surviving original camp records, there is no doubt that there was a women's camp in Liebau under the command of Gross-Rosen. The International Tracing Service (ITS) catalog, citing the recollections of former prisoners collected at the Arolsen archives, dates the formation of the Liebau subcamp to July 1944. In accordance with original German records (transport rosters), as well as postwar records of the trials of Liebau female staff members, the camp was created in September 1944. The first transport was sent on September 19, 1944. It numbered 200 women—Hungarian Jews who were sent to Liebau from the Auschwitz concentration camp. The prisoners had been given numbers 59801 through 59810. The entire transport was divided into three groups and assigned to work at three local companies. Prisoners numbered 59801 through 59850 worked at the Kurt Laske furniture factory, where ammunition crates were manufactured; those numbered 59851 through 59900 worked at the Heinz Wendt machine factory, making aircraft parts; and those numbered 59901 through 60000 worked at Nordland GmbH, making tank treads.

In mid-October 1944, a transport of nearly 300 women arrived from Auschwitz. Besides Polish and Hungarian Jewish women, there were also Jewish women from France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. They were given numbers 74100 through 74939 and were also assigned to work in the aforementioned three companies (the approximate shares were: Nordland, 150 women; Laske, 100; Wendt, 50).

One more group of 50 Jewish women was sent to Liebau in the same month; they received numbers 76131 through 76180.
Therefore, the total population of Liebau labor camp was approximately 550 female prisoners.

Work went on in the plants 24 hours a day without a stop. Some prisoners worked in the daytime, some at night. The shifts rotated every week. Besides working in the factories, the women also did farm-field work as well as work at the airfield construction site.

The living conditions in the camp were adequate. The living quarters were in two types of barracks: wooden and brick. They could be heated in the winter. The brick ones had tile stoves, while the wooden ones had iron stoves. The women slept on bunks arranged in double tiers, one over the other. Each woman had two blankets; one served as a cover, while the other served as a sheet.

Initially, the clothing available was inadequate. Not only was underwear in short supply, so too were blouses and shirts. The shortages were made up in time from supplies in the warehouse. There were also instances of some female guards sharing their clothes with prisoners, although it was forbidden.

The food was poor. Too little was issued, although it was issued regularly, three times a day. The food for the entire day consisted of breakfast, one-fourth of a small loaf of bread, a bit of butter, and some coffee; lunch, 0.75 to 1 liter (3 to 4 cups) of watery soup; and supper, the same soup as at lunch. Women working the night shift received an extra portion of soup. From time to time, there would be a ration of jam, sugar (about four tablespoons), and milk.

Female German guards in the service of the SS oversaw the camp. The commander's name was Kowa; she came from Bavaria. The barracks commander was Gertrud Kolberg from the Breslau (Wrocław) area. The female overseers (Aufseherinnen) were simple girls who had been recruited by the local Labor Office (Arbeitsamt) shortly before the camp's establishment. They were taken to Gross-Rosen, where they were assigned to guard duty in the ranks of the SS. After one day at Gross-Rosen, they were sent to the camp at Parschnitz (later Poříčí). There, they underwent 10 days of training consisting of watching the local female guards work. The Aufseherinnen's duties included escorting the prisoners to their workplaces, watching over them during work, making sure they did not talk or shirk work, and escorting them back to the camp 12 hours later. Then the guards were off duty until the next day. Every three or four weeks, there would be Sunday guard duty. On Sundays there were roll calls, which were conducted by the camp commander and barracks commander. The Aufseherinnen filed reports with the camp commander on improper behavior by prisoners, and the camp commander would mete out bodily punishments: she beat their faces and hands, cut their hair, or ordered them to stand outside for a long time. The guards at Liebau were dressed in SS uniforms, but, as their trial records show, they did not carry weapons.

There is no detailed information on the medical aid at Liebau. We know that among the Jewish prisoners there was a Polish doctor, Helena Ryłło, who had probably been brought to the camp specially. However, there are no references at all to a hospital (Revier) operating in the camp. Over the camp's eight months of existence, 10 women died due to illnesses. Most of them were reportedly Hungarian women. Their bodies were buried in coffins near the Catholic cemetery in Liebau.

The camp was liberated on May 8, 1945.

**SOURCES**

Magdalena Zając

**LUDWIGSDORF**
The Gross-Rosen subcamp for women at Ludwigsdorf (later Ludwikowice Kłodzkie) came into being in the summer of 1944. However, the history of the camp located here goes back considerably longer. Since at least June 1942, there was a camp at Ludwigsdorf. The camp was situated in a valley on the edge of Ludwigsdorf and was surrounded by forest and mountains. It was composed of two sections: male and female.

There was a common bathhouse for women and men on the border of the two sections. There were approximately 400 prisoners, Polish Jews, in the women's camp; the men's section held 600 Jews, who were Polish, Dutch, Belgian, and French nationals. Both the women and the men were put to work at the Dynamit AG and Mölke-Werke ammunition factory. Although the death rate at the camp was very high, the population remained the same. That was because new transports of Jews were sent to Ludwigsdorf from other camps. The following is known about the Ludwigsdorf camp:

On June 23, 1942, an unknown number of women arrived from the camp at Ottnuth (later Otmet); among them was Cesia Finkiel; both sections of the camp were already in existence.

In early 1943, a group of men arrived at Ludwigsdorf from the camp at Brande (later Prądki in Opole Province); Kazimierz Olszewski arrived in that transport.

In April 1943, approximately 100 girls arrived from the Gogolin forced labor camp for Jews; Fela Kurztag was in that transport.

In late November and early December 1943, an unknown number of men arrived from the camp at Annaberg (later Góra Świętej Anny); Dawid Glikman was in that transport.

In early spring 1944, approximately 50 Dutch women were transported to Ludwigsdorf.

On March 28, 1944, a transport of 198 men arrived from the defunct camp at Marktstädt. They were sick and weak prisoners who had undergone a selection and were unfit for
work at the Krupp works in Fünfteichen. Berek Goldman arrived in that transport.\(^4\)

In April or May 1944, approximately 10 women from the camp at Annaberg were admitted.\(^1\)

Prior to July 1944, an unknown number of Jewish women from Hungary were transported to Ludwigsdorf.

In July 1944, women were brought from the defunct female camp at Klettendorf in Breslau (later Klecina, a section of Wrocław).

Between late August and September 24, 1944, a transport of Polish Jewish women arrived; it is probable that the women were brought from Auschwitz concentration camp.

In mid-1944, a decision was made to convert what had been a mixed men’s and women’s camp into a strictly female subcamp of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. On July 22–23 of that year, the men’s section of the camp was closed. Approximately 230 healthy prisoners were sent on to the camp in Faulbrück. However, 455 Jews unfit for work were sent on to Auschwitz concentration camp; 370 of them were gassed.\(^6\)

The new transports of women were lodged in the barracks that the men had vacated at Ludwigsdorf; approximately 600 women lived at Ludwigsdorf. The camp was guarded by the SS. The names of three guards are known: Margarite Schüler, Elizabeth Bischof (born June 7, 1916), and Winger. The name of the camp leader (Lagerführerin) is unknown.

All the women worked in the Dynamit AG and Mölke-Werke factory. The work went on continuously and was divided into three shifts of eight hours each. The women made ammunition, grenades, and other explosives. This work was extremely dangerous and a health hazard; the women were continuously exposed to a variety of dangerous chemicals. Weighing gunpowder was an especially hazardous job. The clouds of dust and gas caused heart, lung, and eye diseases. Depending on the type of gunpowder, the dye turned their skin yellow, green, or red. Giza Klein described the consequences of that work: “Many people got lung conditions because of the gunpowder. We were very dirty. You couldn’t get yourself clean. Everything was greenish yellow from the gunpowder. Your hands were pungent from gunpowder. Bread also had a bitter taste. There were no lice or bedbugs—they ran away from the gunpowder. The gunpowder killed everything.”\(^7\)

The only supposed body protection they had was kerchiefs tied around their faces and an extra ration of a half liter (two cups) of milk a day. The death rate was high, due to the hazardous work, combined with the absence of medical care, hunger, and the terror prevalent in the camps (both the earlier camp and the Gross-Rosen subcamp). According to Josef Teichmann, a German who worked at the same ammunition factory, approximately 300 prisoners were buried in the cemetery behind the factory.\(^8\)

Production was halted at the factory in January 1945 due to the shortage of raw materials. The women were sent to dig ditches and to build defensive fortifications.\(^9\) In mid-April 1945, some of the prisoners were evacuated, at first on foot, then later by train, to the camp at Biesnitzer Grund. Cesia Finkiel, who was taken away in that transport, remembers that there were 300 girls in Görlitz. We do not know if they had all been transported there from Ludwigsdorf. Sick and weak women who were unfit for transport were left at the Ludwigsdorf camp. Soviet soldiers liberated them on the night of May 8–9, 1945.

After the war, there were two trials of former SS guards from the Ludwigsdorf camp. Elizabeth Bischof was tried in 1946 by the Municipal Criminal Court in Jicin, in what is now the Czech Republic. On February 27, 1946, she was sentenced to 12 years’ imprisonment. After she was released on probation on October 23, 1953, she went to Germany.\(^10\) Margarite Schüler, tried by the Wrocław District Court on October 31, 1947, was sentenced to 3 years in prison. She was released on January 3, 1949, having served her sentence.\(^11\)

**NOTES**

1. AZIH, Account No. 924, Cesia Finkiel.
2. AZIH, Account No. 960, Fela Kurztag.
4. AZIH, Account No. 946, Berek Goldman.
6. AMRO, D-Au II-3/1—Quarantäne-Liste, k. 6; AZIH, Account No. 946.
9. AMGR, 4801/DP.
10. AMGR, 7103/DP—Information on female guards at concentration camps in the Czech Republic.

**MÄHRISCH WEISSWASSER**

The Gross-Rosen subcamp in Mährisch Weisswasser (Bila Voda) came into being in September 1944. Information about how many women were sent there or how they were numbered could not be found, but it is known that they were put to work at the Telefunken company (the former Friswerke).
Information collected after the war by the local Czech government shows that the subcamp was established in early 1944. The camp accommodated Jewish women from Hungary, Romania, Poland, and France. The camp was probably established especially for the Telefunken company of Berlin. There is also information on a transport from Auschwitz of women who were found fit to work.

Most likely 10 women were assigned to work in the forest to get the wood needed to build the camp, which was composed of six wooden barracks measuring 9 × 18 up to 9 × 27 meters (9.8 × 19.7 up to 9.8 × 29.5 yards). The camp was surrounded by barbed wire, which was electrified at night. The camp was designed for 500 people. According to postwar information, 650 people passed through it; 500 people were numbered. Of the total of 650, 4 people died and 2 of them died in the hospital at Červená Voda shortly after liberation.1

According to the account of Růžena Simonovičové, who was treated at the Červená Voda hospital, the camp was founded in late September 1944.2

The subcamp’s operation, like other subcamps located in the Sudeten district, was coordinated by a special SS-Kommando Trautenau located in what was then called Parschnitz.

Only one member of the camp staff has been identified: Herbert Gustaw Arndt (born August 4, 1889), a guard at Mährisch Weisswasser from February 1945 to May 1945. He had previously served at the concentration camps in Krakau-Plaszw (September 25, 1944–September 30, 1944) and Riese/Wüstegiersdorf (September 30, 1944–February 1945). He was found not guilty in a postwar investigation because he had been drafted into the SS guard staff on September 25, 1944, that is, at the end of the war when Hitler brought the oldest draftees into the army. Moreover, according to witness testimony, he did not agree with Nazi Party ideology.3

The Mährisch Weisswasser camp was liberated on May 8, 1945. Earlier, on April 8, 1945, the female German guards (SS women) left the camp in fear of the approaching Red Army.

There were 650 prisoners in the camp, and upon liberation, they left it and hid in nearby villages. There was no one left in the camp on the day the Red Army entered it.4

The prisoners went back to their homes. Due to their serious condition, three women had to stay in the hospital at Červená Voda. One of them recovered, and the other two died in the hospital. Their bodies were buried at the cemetery in Červená Voda.

After liberation, the camp was used by the Soviet Army.5


NOTES
1. AMGR, DP 6772.
2. Ibid.
3. AMGR, MF 44/674–678, Investigation of Herbert Gustaw Arndt.
4. AMGR, DP 6772.
5. Ibid.

MERZDORF

The Gross-Rosen subcamp at Merzdorf in Riesengebirge (later Marciszów) was located approximately eight kilometers (five miles) north of Landeshut (Kamienna Góra). From 1942, there was a forced labor camp for Jewish women (Zwangsarbeitslager für Juden, ZALfJ), administered by Organisation Schmelt, in Merzdorf. The camp was situated near the linen mill belonging to Kramsta-Methner und Frahne AG. Women from the camp were put to work in the mill. The prisoners lived in brick barracks.

In the summer of 1944, forced labor camp (ZAL) Merzdorf was converted into a women’s subcamp of Gross-Rosen. According to the information from the International Tracing Service (ITS), the first reference to the Merzdorf camp under Gross-Rosen’s command is from August 1944. Based on the materials available, a small group (11 names) of Merzdorf subcamp prisoners has been identified. The numbers given these 11 women ranged from 5078 to 67272, which indicates that the first numbers could have been issued in September 1944.

The camp held several hundred Jewish women (the exact number has not been established). The prisoners’ work did not change after the ZAL camp was converted into a Gross-Rosen subcamp. The prisoners still worked in the Kramsta-Methner und Frahne AG linen spinning mill.

As determined by the Main Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Wrocław (OKBZHW), the job of camp leader (Lagerführerin) was held by SS officer E. Rinke.

The Merzdorf subcamp operated until the end of the war. It was liberated on May 8, 1945.

The Mittelsteine (Polish: Ścinawka Średnia) subcamp was established on August 23, 1944, with the arrival of a transport of 200 women from the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. These prisoners were registered in the main camp with numbers from 53591 to 54000 and 55001 to 55150. In this transport there were Polish Jews, many of them from the dissolved Łódź ghetto. One of them, former prisoner Pesel S., stated as follows: “I arrived in the Mittelsteine camp. Before that I had been in Auschwitz for a week, to where I had been brought from Łódź. . . . In Mittelsteine I had the prisoner number 55024. The Mittelsteine camp was a Gross-Rosen subcamp. The camp had about four hundred prisoners. We were initially guarded by men for a few days. Later the camp was taken over by wardresses. We were also guarded by wardresses in the factory.”

A second transport arrived on October 5, 1944, with 200 Hungarian and a few Czech Jewish women. They were given the prisoner numbers 64001 to 64200.

Halina G., a Polish prisoner, stated the following about the camp and its internal workings: “The camp in Mittelsteine was located on the edge of a small town. The camp consisted of two single level wooden barracks. They held the female prisoners. There was a smaller barrack in which were the infirmary bay, doctor’s room, camp elder’s room, kitchen, and store room. In the barracks there were bunks for us to sleep on. They had straw sacks. The women in the camp were almost exclusively Jews. Poles were the majority, but there were a large number from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and a few other nationalities.”

The women worked at the Firma Albert Patin, Werkstätten für Fernsteuerungstechnik Berlin. It had relocated in 1943 at the request of the Reich Air Ministry (RLM) to Mittelsteine after it had been damaged during bombing raids. Hana G. had the following to say about her work:

Each day we left the camp for work in the nearby factory. It was probably a factory for aircraft parts. I worked at a lathe. The work was done in two shifts each of twelve hours (from 6:00 in the morning to 6:00 in the evening and from 6:00 in the evening to 6:00 in the morning). Not only women from our camp worked in this factory but also men and women of other nationalities. I did not know if there were prisoners from other camps because you were not allowed to speak with anyone. The factory foremen were men—mostly Germans. Some of the women from our camp worked outside the factory site, constructing a building that resembled a concrete bunker. That work was very difficult. Sometimes the female workers were working in water up to their knees. My mother and sister worked there. After we came back from the factory and had our meal we were forced to work in the camp, carrying, for example, bricks from outside the camp into the camp. In the spring of 1945, we began to construct something with these bricks. . . . Because of the additional work there was tension between the company and the camp commander, because the company was concerned that it had good labor.

The camp commander was SS-Oberaufseherin Philomena Locker, who for the crimes she committed in the camp and during its evacuation was sentenced in 1948 before a court in Świnica to death. The sentence was commuted to seven years’ imprisonment with hard labor. She was released from prison in 1953.

Hana G. made the following statements about mistreatment by the camp commander:

Once, in 1945, during a roll call in the camp yard, the camp commander ordered us to give the names of those who are said to have told the foreman that the female prisoners had to do extra work in the camp after their work in the factory, carrying bricks. My mother stepped out of the line and admitted that she had done it. Whether that was true, I don’t know. The camp commander took my mother to where the wardresses slept and beat her. I can no longer say with what she was beaten and how she was beaten. As a result of the beating, my mother’s spine was damaged. This was only determined when she was in hospital in Munich after the liberation. After she was beaten, my mother had to go back to work.

Pesel S. also made a statement about the camp commander:

I only have the impression that the camp commander was very mean. She was dangerous. She had one or more dogs. Once, when I went past the storeroom and tried to get some carrots through the window, she saw me from afar and her large dog came running toward me. He bit me in my back.

Another time, at roll call we were told that we would only get our soup when the girls report that we had stolen carrots. I and seven others immediately reported that we had stolen. We were put up against the barracks wall with our faces to the wall. Then the other girls had to go past us and each of them had to give us one blow with a large wooden cudgel. Any one who would not hit us did not get any soup.
The evacuation of the Mittelsteine camp began in March–April 1945. It took place in a number of stages. The prisoners were taken to a number of Gross-Rosen subcamps, for example, Grafenort, Altheide, and Mährisch Weisswasser. Former Polish prisoner Dwora B. stated the following:

In April 1945 (I can’t remember the exact date), the Mittelsteine camp was evacuated and we were taken by foot to the Grafenort camp. On May 4, 1945, all of us, i.e., all the female prisoners in the Grafenort camp, were led into the forest by the SS wardresses from our camp (the SS wardresses who were in the Mittelsteine camp). In the forest, we met Wehrmacht soldiers who were coming from the front. The Wehrmacht soldiers asked the SS wardresses, “Where are you taking these people?” The SS wardresses replied: “That is our business. It has nothing to do with you!” The soldiers replied: “We know that you shoot defenseless people but you won’t succeed. The Russians are not far from here!”

With weapons drawn the soldiers forced the SS wardresses to take us back to the Grafenort camp. When we arrived at the camp the wardresses fled. One of the Wehrmacht soldiers stayed at the entrance to the camp and made sure that nothing happened to us. On the following day the Russians marched into Grafenort.\(^{11}\)

Two women found near Mittelsteine are the probable number of prisoners who died during the evacuation march. They were shot in the nape of the neck. Autopsies were carried out by the Klodzko (Glatz) state prosecutor. Their bodies were brought from Mittelsteine to Grafenort.\(^{12}\)

Gizi B. wrote the following about the evacuation of the other group of women prisoners to Mährisch Weisswasser:

In the middle of April 1945 I was one of two hundred women, who were transferred from Mittelsteine to the Weisswasser camp to work in a factory there. However, we never worked there. Instead we were held inside the barracks until we were liberated.

Our conditions in the camp were indescribable. We were called to roll call twice daily, morning and evening, and received once a day a small piece of bread and a few spoons of a so-called soup. We were covered in lice while we were in this camp. Had we been forced to endure this torture much longer, I doubt that many of us would have survived.\(^{13}\)

**NOTES**

3. BA-L, IV 405 AR-Z 105/67, p. 230, statement by Polish witness Pesel B.
4. AK-IPN.
5. BA-L, IV 405 AR-Z 105/67, p. 290, statement by Polish witness Hana G.
9. Ibid., p. 292, statement by Hana G.
10. Ibid., pp. 230–231, statement by Pesel S.
11. Ibid., p. 276, statement by Dwora B.

**MORCHENSTERN**

As the Gross-Rosen subcamp in the small Silesian industrial city of Zillerthal-Erdmannsdorf (later Mysłakowice), which had existed in a textile factory since July 1944, was evacuated in front of the rapidly advancing Soviet troops in mid-February 1945, the commando of about 300 women was transferred in one group to the other side of the Riesengebirge Mountains. After the arduous march over the wintry mountains, which began on February 17, the column of female prisoners arrived in Morchenstern (Smržovka), near Gablonz (Jablonec nad Nisou), on February 19.\(^{1}\)

Here, the women—Polish, Czech, and Hungarian Jews—were put to forced labor in a newly established subcamp located in the aircraft engine works of the Mitteldeutsche Motorenwerke Taucha (MIMO), a subsidiary of the aircraft manufacturer concern Auto Union AG Chemnitz.\(^{2}\) This MIMO factory, which was given the code name “Iser-Werke,” belonged to the group of factories that had been transferred out of the Leipzig area because of heavy air attacks there. Since 1941, its technical director, Dr. Ing. William Werner, played a leading role in the directing organs of the German aviation arms sphere, such as the “Reichsmarshall’s Industry Council for the Production of Air Force Equipment,” the “Armaments Council,” the Fighter Staff, and the Armaments Staff. Correspondingly, he exerted influence over the allocation of concentration camp prisoner labor. As a result of heavy bomb damage sustained at the main works in Taucha, near Leipzig, on July 7, 1944, the factory management attempted to increase production in its satellite factories such as in Morchenstern. For that purpose, MIMO was allocated and received the female concentration camp prisoners from Zillerthal-Erdmannsdorf. Whether Andreas Baumgartner’s conjecture that parts for the Messerschmitt (Me) 262 jet

**SOURCES** There are no publications specifically on this camp. Archival records may be at the BA-L (IV 405 AR–Z 105/67); AK-IPN (collection regional commission Kraków, Folder 119); and NWHStA-(D) (Dortmund Rep. 118).
fighter were produced in the Iser-Werke is justified has not been established.

Accommodations for the women were in two barracks. In the camp, life was regulated according to the usual camp routine of the female SS overseers, some of whom were put on trial after the war for mishandling the prisoners.

The actual employment of the women in Morchenstern was limited in duration, due to the circumstances of the war. After barely a month, the detachment was again transferred. In connection with the last-ditch effort to mount an effective air defense, the prisoners from Morchenstern were taken to the Nordhausen subcamp, where 294 women arrived on March 15, 1945. By then it was too late to put them to work. On April 4, the women departed on a days-long foot march and railroad journey to Mauthausen, where 221 of them arrived on April 15. Even then the suffering of these women was not at an end; 44 of the women were put into work details at Mauthausen and presumably stayed there until their liberation on May 5. Probably the only Belgian in the Morchenstern subcamp, Marie M. was able, together with other Belgian “protective custody” prisoners, to reach Switzerland on April 22 on a transport organized by the International Red Cross.

On May 1, 1945, shortly before Mauthausen was liberated, a larger part of the women from Morchenstern were forced on a death march from the Mauthausen main camp to the Gunskirchen subcamp, where an unknown number of them died of typhus. One of the survivors, Hungarian Jew Sarolta M., stated in June 1945:

When we departed, we received supplies for one day. We marched out. While under way we received hardly anything to eat. The hunger was terrible. The men plucked grass and herbs, which we cooked. Sometimes we succeeded in digging up a couple of potatoes, but anyone who was caught doing that was shot down. . . . Naturally there were many who could not endure this march, so many people sat down exhausted by the side of the road. The SS officer drove a bicycle along the edge of the road and shot anyone whom he saw sitting. Once we sat down, completely exhausted. The SS man noticed this and drew his pistol to shoot us. We quickly sprang up, and so he let us live. . . . Our foot march ended in Gunskirchen. We arrived in pouring rain. The camp for us had been erected in a forest. There was hardly any straw there, and we were given hardly anything to eat. A quarter liter [8.5 ounces] of soup and 120 grams [4.2 ounces] of bread was our daily ration. Typhus broke out there. Many men got it. We women received Swiss care packages, and so we held out somewhat better, but later the infection raged among us as well, naturally.  

How many women survived the strains of the many evacuations in the end is not known. Up until the evacuation of Morchenstern, there were only 3 deaths. The decrease in the number of women to 221 before the arrival in Mauthausen very probably reflects the fact that 35 women escaped during the foot march from Nordhausen-Grosswerther to Herzsberg, where the group boarded a train, and that a further 30 probably escaped during the train trip. That latter group included Czech prisoner Vera Gombosová-Oravcová, who succeeded in fleeing and in hiding herself until the arrival of American troops.  

SOURCES There is no secondary work that addresses this camp exclusively, but information may be found in Joachim Neander, Das Konzentrationslager “Mittelbau” in der Endphase der nationalsozialistischen Diktatur (Clausthal-Zellerfeld: Papierflieger, 1997); Andreas Baumgartner, Die vergessenen Frauen von Mauthausen. Die weiblichen Häftlinge des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen und ihre Geschichte (Vienna: Verl. Österreich, 1997).

Archival records are available in the SÜA (KT/OVS, K. 171), HAFHDCB, and AG-MD.
isolated and could not leave the camp grounds as the other forced laborers could. Instead, they were escorted to work by the female overseers and had considerably harder work than other laborers. They worked in the weaving mill and the linen combing mill, where the dust was very heavy; some women loaded ammunition onto trucks in the factory basements. They worked in two shifts of nine hours a day each and had Sundays off. From their appearance, as forced laborers have all agreed in their testimonies, they must have had very hard conditions and very unsatisfactory food. That is why many of the forced laborers tried to help the Jewish girls. They would leave food at spots they had agreed upon, and they would get correspondence through to family and friends.

Forced laborer Lidia Stanek became friends with a Jewish girl at work. Throughout her time at Neusalz, she maintained correspondence with her and sent letters to her family in occupied Poland. One of the German women overseers aided her in this. The letters, written from 1942 to 1945, and the recollections of Aliza Besser, a forced laborer and then a prisoner at the Gross-Rosen subcamp, tell about the atmosphere prevailing in Neusalz. The women were overworked and underfed, and they all stopped menstruating after a short while at the camp. They were maltreated, not only by the SS guards but also by their fellow countrywomen serving in various jobs, such as Judenälteste (Elder of the Jews), cooks, and the dentist. They dreaded sickness, as they could then be allocated for selection and taken away to Auschwitz. They constantly quarreled and informed against one another, but there were also times, mostly during Jewish holy days, when they would pray and sing together. They were depressed by news passed on in smuggled messages about their families being taken away and their closest relatives and friends dying. A transport with clothing arrived in May 1944. Some Hungarian Jewish women recognized their mothers’ and sisters’ belongings. The scenes were very depressing when they caressed the clothing they had known.

There was an infirmary in the camp; a German doctor came in from outside the camp, and the dentist was a Jewish prisoner. She abused her fellow prisoners greatly. Besser writes about her as follows: “My heart aches at how one Jewish woman treats another.” There were over 100 prisoners serving in various jobs. “Bloody Rywka” stood out in particular. Several prisoners died throughout the camp’s existence; there were also several accidents at work. One of the prisoners was pulled into a loom by her hair; another one had her hand cut off. They came down in the masses with furuncles (boils).

In late May and early June 1944, they became aware that some changes were on the way. Pachowa, who was then commander, announced that there would be administrative changes on June 19. Because of the closing of the Organisation Schmelt camps, the existing forced labor camp was to become a Gross-Rosen subcamp and would be under SS supervision. At a roll call, 897 women were officially handed over. As Besser relates, they were alone unsupervised for several days: none of them escaped, thinking that they would be treated better. There was a “holiday of love and flirting,” as French laborers had come to the camp.

It was only several days later that about 50 female guards (Aufseherinnen) in SS uniforms appeared. They had been picked from German women working at factories in Neusalz and sent to Ravensbrück for several weeks of training. Elizabeth Gersen became the new camp commander, and her assistant was Effenberge. As Besser continues, a roll call was ordered on July 6, 1944. A delegation of four SS men arrived. Every woman had to undress and go into a room where the SS men were sitting behind a table, with Aufseherinnen standing at the sides. A circle had been drawn in chalk in the middle of the room, and the naked women were to enter it one at a time. They were inspected and measured, and their teeth were checked. They were separated into categories and then assigned numbered tags, which they had to wear hanging around their necks. Numbers ranging from 47945 to 48645 were issued at that time. Unfortunately, nothing about the movement of transports is known. Several prisoners were moved to the Auschwitz concentration camp. There were 800 prisoners at the time of evacuation. Conditions had changed completely; discipline had been tightened, and all communications with local workers came to an end. The prisoners received printed numbers, which they had to sew onto the left front of their clothing, and blue-gray striped material to sew onto their backs where squares 25 by 15 centimeters (10 by 6 inches) had been cut out.

News arrived in January 1945 of the impending evacuation. Preparations began. Some clothing from Birkenau, which was to be recycled into raw materials, was distributed to the prisoners. Pants were made out of blankets; there were no shoes. The winter was exceptionally cold. The subcamp was evacuated on January 31, 1945. Prisoners were given two loaves of bread, a jar of jam, and some margarine. They were arranged in four columns of 200 women; the escort was made up of five Aufseherinnen and two SS men. They walked 29 kilometers (18 miles) a day. They slept in barns and schools and received a hot meal once a day. One of the prisoners, Franciszka Wajchman, escaped from the transport and returned to Nowa Sól; forced laborer Antoni Ostojewski hid her in the camp office until the Soviet forces entered. Upon reaching Christianstadt, the Aufseherinnen returned to Neusalz. All they found at Christianstadt, which was also a Gross-Rosen subcamp, were the bodies of dead female prisoners.

A two-day stopover was ordered; then they continued on foot toward Dresden. The escort was changed, and the treatment of the prisoners improved. Seeing what terrible condition the women were in, local residents made them some food. In early March 1945, the column of prisoners reached the Zwodau labor camp, where they stayed for a few days. Then they were moved to the Flossenbürg concentration camp. They arrived there on March 9 and were given a decent meal. They could wash up, and they also received a change of clothing: dresses and men’s clothes. In 7 to 10 days, they were
sent to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp by rail transport. They did not get food, and the trip lasted 10 days. The mortalities were massive, and the prisoners themselves threw the dead out of the railroad cars. When they got to the camp, they encountered piles of rotting corpses. A typhus epidemic was raging. They were put to work getting rid of the bodies. The Neusalz women lived under those conditions until liberation. They died in masses. Those who survived in a state of extreme exhaustion were transported by English soldiers to barracks, then to Sweden for treatment. The malnourished, emaciated women had walked approximately 500 kilometers (311 miles) in the cold. Many of them were shot or died during the march; those who survived until victory died of emaciation in masses. Not all the dates and figures provided are certain. There is little accurate information on the death marches. Due to the ghastly conditions under which the prisoners lived, memoirs often provide erroneous dates and transmutation in masses. Not all the dates and figures provided are certain. There is little accurate information on the death marches. Due to the ghastly conditions under which the prisoners lived, memoirs often provide erroneous dates and transport sizes, but the atmosphere of those atrocious days has been relayed very well.

Aufseherin Gertruda Hoffmann was identified and tried after the war. On September 12, 1946, a Special Criminal Court sentenced her to four years of incarceration, forfeiture of public rights, and confiscation of all her property.

**SOURCES**


Documentary sources comprise the memoir of Aliza Besser (the original is located at YVA in Jerusalem) and the investigative records on Neusalz from the GKBZHWp.

Leokadia Lewandowska trans. Gerard Mańka

**NIEDERODERWITZ**

The history of the Gross-Rosen subcamp Niederoderwitz can be traced back to 1942 and the effort by Osram KG to double the production capacity of its cable works for wolfram and molybdenum cables and bolts, both of which were of vital importance to the manufacturing of pipes. At the same time, a part of the production process was to be transferred to peripheral areas of Germany deemed to be safer from air raids. Osram leased a chocolate factory in the vicinity of a railway station near Niederoderwitz situated about five kilometers (three miles) from Zittau—the Kosa Schokoladenfabrik Rolle KG Niederoderwitz/O.L., also known as Kosa. Its owner founded a holding company, Apparatebau Niederoderwitz GmbH, Niederoderwitz (O.L.), which then took over the production while the technical supervision remained with Osram, which supplied skilled tradesmen and engineers. The Apparatebau took up production in the summer of 1944.

The increasing threat of air raids resulted in a decision in July 1944 to relocate under the code name Richard II all the production of the cable factory deemed essential to the war effort to the chalk mines in Leitmeritz, located not very far from the concentration camp at Theresienstadt. Of the 900 laborers needed for the production process, there should have been 300 Osram employees plus about 600 prisoners, a third of them women. In the case of Niederoderwitz, this meant that these prisoners should receive some training up to four weeks in groups of 120 to 140 prisoners for the work in Richard II. The company tried to plan in advance all the details for the intended relocation and thereby based its plans on using the prisoners designated for forced labor and already trained in Niederoderwitz when assembling the machines and qualified workers.

Preparations began at the same time for the use of prisoners in Niederoderwitz. In negotiations between the Osram administration and SS-Obersturmbannführer Koegel, the Flossenbürg concentration camp commander, the decision was made to follow “general construction security measures.” For accommodation, the “old massive barracks” should be used and be separated by barbed wire from the so-called barracks city—accommodation for the foreign workers on the land of the Deutsche Reichsbahn (German Railways) located beside the factory—where other foreign laborers and 12 SS guards were housed. In the barrack, the already installed washbasins were replaced by simpler iron drains.

However, right from the start of deployment of the prisoners, there were continual delays since the SS could not provide enough prisoners for selection. Already, very early on, the company administration learned that the prisoners would be Hungarian Jews. In any event, both the resistance of Gauleiter of Saxony Mutschmann against the use of Jews in Niederoderwitz and the difficulty in obtaining blankets could be overcome.

On December 30, 1944, the Osram engineer Behrndt finally selected in Flossenbürg 180 “Hungarian Jews . . . almost all of whom were aged between twenty and forty” from a newly arrived transport. As a matter of fact, among them were at least one Jew from Czechoslovakia and another one from Romania. Behrndt stressed in a detailed report that he was successful “in pushing through our demands for skilled labor so that we got, for example, all the metal workers that were on the transport.” Behrndt also mentioned that he chose “only those prisoners who looked physically fit” and that he “rejected the sick and fragile.” Out of those selected, 140 were to be sent to Niederoderwitz, and another 40 were to go directly to Leitmeritz to help there with the assembly of the production installations. The prisoners arrived in Niederoderwitz on the evening of January 7, 1945, and were forced to work the next day.

Because there is a dearth of survivors’ reports, we unfortunately do not know anything from the prisoners’ perspective about conditions in the subcamp or about the working conditions in Niederoderwitz. However, the company management expressed satisfaction as to training successes and
productivity while requesting additional security “so that the prisoners could be deployed at all posts that were envisaged for them.” It is therefore likely that the prisoners were guarded during their 12-hour shift (of which there were two) not only by the approximately 27 civil trainees but also inside the company by SS guard companies. There is no information available on how the prisoners were treated. However, there do not appear to have been any deaths, and according to reports, the prisoner numbers did not vary throughout the entire time period. Because the investment in the training of the prison workers was particularly valuable to the management of the company, it made sure that once the prisoners were marked by wearing an oval-shaped badge, they were transferred at the end of February and the beginning of March to Leitmeritz. This way it was hoped—in conjunction with repeated statements to the SS that they were “young, good workers”—to prevent them from meeting the same fate as simple “construction prisoners,” a fate aptly described by Miroslav Kárný as “extermination through work.”25 This distinction takes on a special meaning insofar as 80 very detailed file notes document that the Osram employees knew about the gruesome conditions at the construction sites. As these files reveal, the Osram employees had contributed themselves to the worsening of these conditions by demanding repeatedly that the pace of work be increased.

The use of prisoners in Niederoderwitz ended with the transfer of 140 prisoners to Leitmeritz at the end of February or the beginning of March 1945.26 With the end of the war approaching, the Richard II project ceased as well to have any meaning.

Since the subcamp was not listed in the Catalogue of Camps and Prisons (CCP), the West German Central Office of State Justice Administrations (ZdL) did not carry out any investigation of its own.27 Even though there appeared in the 1970s two statements by former prisoners of the Niederoderwitz subcamp in the investigation into the main Flossenbürg camp, and despite appropriate recommendations by the investigating state prosecutors, it did not result in the opening of any investigation. Further judicial investigations have not been recorded.

**SOURCES** The most important source for researching the relocation of the Osram Cable Factory, which includes the Niederoderwitz camp, can be found in the LA-B. The confiscation of the extensive Osram files by the Soviet occupation authorities turned out to be a stroke of luck, as these files were later given back to the German Democratic Republic. As a result, researchers today have access to the detailed planning of responsible persons at Osram and to details about their negotiations with the SS and Reich authorities. (LA-B, A Rep.231, particularly Files 0.481 to 0.502). The Osram company—at the turn of the century a 100 percent–owned subsidiary of Siemens—claimed in response to a question by the author in August 1999, on the other hand, not to have an archive. A few important documents from this collection have been published by Laurentz Demsps, “Die Ausbeutung von KZ-Häftlingen durch den Osram-Konzern 1944/45 (Dokumentation),” ZfG 26 (1978): 416–437; and Hans Brenner, “Zur Frage der Ausbeutung von KZ-Häftlingen durch den Osram-Konzern 1944/45 (Dokumentation),” ZfG 27 (1979): 952–965.

East German historians, based on the Osram files that were returned to the German Democratic Republic, began relatively early their research into the use of prisoners by Osram; see, for example, Laurenz Demps, “Zum weiteren Ausbau des staatmonopolistischen Apparates der faschistischen Kriegswirtschaft in den Jahren 1943 bis 1945 und zur Rolle der SS und der Konzentrationslager im Rahmen der Rüstungsproduktion, dargestellt am Beispiel der unterirdischen Verlagerung von Teilen der Rüstungsindustrie” (Ph.D. diss., East Berlin, 1970). However, their research was of limited value as they tried merely to document the supposed influence of large corporations on state institutions and the war economy.

Miroslav Kárný addresses the effects of the relocation of the Osram Cable Factory on the prisoners of concern in Leitmeritz in his “ ‘Vernichtung durch Arbeit’ in Leitmeritz. Die SS-Führungsstäbe in der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft,” 1999 4 (1993): 37–61. However, he incorrectly assumed that the prisoners in Niederoderwitz never made it to Leitmeritz. Rainer Fröbe dealt in a basic essay with the significance of forced labor by skilled workers; see his “KZ-Häftlinge als Reserve qualifizierter Arbeitskraft. Eine späte Entdeckung der deutschen Industrie und ihre Folgen,” in Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager: Entwicklung und Struktur, ed. Ulrich Herbert, Karin Orth, and Christian Deckmann (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1996), pp. 637–681. One of the cases he examined is the Niederoderwitz subcamp. In doing so, Fröbe examined the connection between survival chances of the prisoners and their qualifications. The prisoners were chosen by the Osram employees in Flossenbürg and not selected as originally envisaged—and described by Fröbe—in Gross-Rosen.

This entry is based on an article in which the author deals with forced labor as exemplified by skilled workers at the Auschwitz-Bobrek (Siemens-Schuckert Works [SSW]) and at the Niederoderwitz subcamps: Rolf Schmolling, “ ‘Pflichtigsten Aufrosten’—Zur Bedeutung der Häftlingszwangsarbeit für die Produktion bei Siemens und Osram,” in Konzentrationslager–Geschichte und Erinnerung. Neue Studien zum KZ-System und zur Gedenkultur, ed. Petra Hausstein, Rolf Schmolling, and Jürg Skribeleit (Ulm: Klemm & Oelschlager, 2001), pp. 115–132. In this article, the main focus of the analysis is on companies planning their production combined with the use of prisoners in the context of a war economy.

Rolf Schmolling  
trans. Stephen Pallavicini

**NOTES**


soldier (Landser) who carried their rifles slung across their shoulders. They carried a machine pistol so that it was always in a position to be fired and the guards indicated that they were prepared to do exactly that. Since the prisoners were held in Wiesengrund, there were search lights on the guard towers which constantly moved across the camp so that from Niesky the camp appeared to us civilians to be huge, particularly when we arrived in the evening at the railway station. In 1944, an air raid bunker was constructed on the camp grounds, probably for the guards.4

Tomala has named those responsible in the Niesky subcamp. The commander until September 1944 was SS-Unterscharführer Franz Sänger; from then until the camp’s dissolution, the commander was SS-Oberscharführer Wilhelm Seibold. Rapportführer was Wilhelm Kirsch. Johann Biworski was in command of the guards. Kurt Weisbrich was senior Kapo. The camp elder was German criminal Kurt Vogel.

A German Federal Archives, External Branch, Ludwigsburg (BA-L) folder contains a report by Dr. Zychski, a prisoner, who has the following to say on the conditions in the Niesky subcamp:

There were hunger rations. As far as I can recall, we received about 300 grams [10.6 ounces] of black loamy bread with a little horse meat on Sundays, on weekdays sometimes beet jam with a little margarine. The usual meal for lunch, as in Gross-Rosen, was a soup made of beets and cabbage leaves, in which every now and then there was small piece of potato, a sinew or a bone. Medical supplies did not match the demand. To make up for the lack of medicines, we made our own, e.g., in order to stop diarrhea we used coals made from burning and crushing bones. The lack of organic calcium was replaced by chalk from wall plaster. I cut boils with tailor’s scissors as there were no surgical tools. The death rate was very high and in the winter of 1944/45 ten prisoners died on average each day.5

As a consequence of the heavy labor, the cold during the winter of 1944–1945, and the poor food, debilitation, hunger edemas, diarrhea, infections, and kidney and lung inflammations were prevalent.

The military situation in Lower Silesia resulted in the evacuation of the Wiesengrund subcamp on February 22, 1945. The evacuation of the Wiesengrund subcamp in Niesky. They were liberated by units of the 2nd Polish Army on April 18, 1945.

The prisoners from the subcamp at Spohla/Brandhofen commenced their death march in the direction of Dresden on April 19, 1945. Some 30 sick prisoners were left at the Brandhofen camp, which was liberated by the Russian Army on April 21, 1945.

On April 22, 1945, tanks of the 1st Corps of the 2nd Polish Army broke through the German defenses. A few prisoners succeeded in getting behind the front line and reached freedom. Many ended up being captured by the Germans. They were taken to a camp in Stolpen and later to the Elbe River, where they were put on barges. On May 5 or 6, 1945, a tug pulled the barges up the Elbe. On May 9, 1945, the prisoners were liberated in the vicinity of Theurenstadt.

While the prisoners in Spohla/Brandhofen had to do fortification works, those in Klein-Radisch bei Klitten worked as an agricultural labor detachment of the Nieskey subcamp until January 23, 1945. It is possible that agricultural produce from this detachment was used to feed the prisoners in Niesky. The death register of the Klitten vicarage contains the record of the burial of five prisoners who were shot in February 1945.


The BA-L holds interesting archival material on the Niesky subcamp.

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**NOTES**

1. Dr. Hans Brenner archive, Zschopau.
2. Dr. Peter Sebald, letter to Dr. Hans Brenner, December 6, 1994, Niesky City Museum.
5. BA-L, ZdL, IV 405 AR-Z 45/77 Bd.2, 3, Aussage Dr. Zychski.

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ENdCyclopedia of CAMPs and Ghettos, 1933–1945
NIESKY/BRANDHOFEN

Despite its short existence, the Gross-Rosen subcamp in Brandhofen (before 1940 and after 1945: Spohla, near the city of Hoyerswerda) had one of the highest death rates. It was established on March 1, 1945, from some of the prisoners of the Niesky subcamp and remained subordinated to the Niesky camp administration until its dissolution.

A local inhabitant gave an eyewitness testimony about the arrival of a column of prisoners in Brandhofen:

On March 1, 1945, a column of about five hundred male prisoners approached Spohla. Emaciated men dressed in thin prison clothing and rags pulled eight horse carts by their long shafts. The shafts were equipped with crossbeams. In each case, two pairs of prisoners in a row pressed with their bodies against the crossbeam, in order to move the cart. Several pairs behind each other had to take on this heavy burden. On the stanchion and on the running board other prisoners pushed themselves, who clearly no longer had any strength left. These miserable figures, visibly racked with pain, who had not received anything warm to eat and drink for fourteen days, were driven forward by heavily armed SS men with Alsatian dogs.

In Spohla there was a mood of silent outrage when the prisoner column arrived. Two barns were requisitioned immediately to accommodate the prisoners. The protests of their owners were answered with a threat by the SS camp leader, as to whether they also wanted to become inmates of this camp.1

The registration numbers of former inmates (mostly Polish men, some of whom also died there) of the Brandhofen subcamp that have been uncovered so far indicate that they were sent to the main camp and registered there at different times. They had prisoner numbers ranging from 1519 to 91800.2

In the largest SS requisitioned barns in the village, 400 men were crammed together so much that most of them could only sleep in a sitting position. Since the barns were locked and barred early in the evening, soon the men had to lay, or rather sit, in their excrements. The local inhabitants were strictly forbidden to go anywhere near these barns.

The prisoners soon found themselves in terrible physical condition. Despite this inhuman treatment, the men had to go out every day to dig trenches sometimes at work sites several kilometers away. The most minor infractions caused the SS guards to beat them without mercy.1

The camp leader of the Niesky subcamp, SS-Oberscharführer Wilhelm Seibold, served also as the camp leader in Brandhofen.4

Some of the men who had arrived from Niesky in an appalling condition after the grueling march did not recover. A small wooden hut was converted into a primitive infirmary, in which, however, there was no medical treatment, so that the men simply withered away until their deaths. The dead were driven into the forest on a cart and then buried there in graves that had been excavated. The prisoners detailed to pull the cart had to load it up with firewood for the kitchen on the return journey.1

Many of the survivors testify that in addition to the prisoners of war (POWs) working in the village, Germans living in Brandhofen and living near the work sites secretly gave food to the prisoners, always running the risk of being caught by the guards and reported to the police. Nevertheless, this aid was scarcely sufficient to improve the fate of the prisoners to any substantial degree.

When the 13 graves were opened after the war, the exhumation commission found the bodily remains of 99 prisoners. Since some of the sick prisoners were exchanged for others who still appeared to be fit for work from the Niesky subcamp and therefore died in Niesky, the number of victims of the Brandhofen subcamp was well over 100. Former prisoner Edward T., who was a witness of the exchange in Niesky, reports: “When the column stopped in Brandhofen, about two or three weeks after the evacuation, they took twenty-two prisoners that were very sick from Brandhofen to Niesky and more healthy ones from Niesky to Brandhofen. Unfortunately all the sick that had just arrived suddenly died after one week. The room for the dead was full up.”9

In spite of this large number of deaths, the death book of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp records only one single death for the Brandhofen subcamp, for Bronis P., a Lithuanian prisoner.7

From the beginning of April 1945, the SS began preparing for the camp’s evacuation. The SS camp leader confiscated the cartwright’s workshop in the village and had the prisoners repair the carts that had come with them from Niesky. Here, locals gave some assistance to the prisoners, who in turn repaired these villagers’ sewing machines and bicycles.8

In the middle of April, shortly before the evacuation from Brandhofen, the SS took a group of 40 prisoners to the Bautzen subcamp of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. Former prisoner Jan L. recalls: “In mid-April we [40 prisoners] were loaded onto a vehicle and were driven to the camp at Bautzen. There, behind the gate of the camp, an SS man ordered four prisoners to get undressed. When he saw the skeletons, bitten by mice, we had to go immediately to the baths and our things were sent to be disinfected. In the baths four prisoners died immediately and the remaining prisoners were put in a special barracks, which were surrounded by additional barbed wire. Once a day we received food and thickened water in a pot that was passed through the fence on a stick, since we were all sick with typhus. We lay like this for several days, the dead and the living together.”99 The camp administration got rid of its typhus cases in this manner.

On the evening of April 19, 1945, the SS drove the 200 or so prisoners who still seemed capable of marching in a westerly direction.10 Former Polish prisoner Bonifacy R. reports on this:
The prisoners from Brandhofen set out again on April 19, 1945, on their evacuation march. Here they also left behind in the camp those who were severely ill and no longer capable of walking. It was a group of thirty people. On April 21, the Russian Army liberated them.

The evacuation column, which came from Brandhofen, was chased toward Dresden. On April 22, at the Radeberg-Dresden crossroads, tanks of the First Corps, Second Polish Army, broke up the German columns. Some of the prisoners succeeded in making it across the front line and reached freedom. The Germans recaptured many of them [due to a German counterattack]. They were placed in a camp near Stolpen and later taken to the Elbe River, where together with other prisoners they were loaded onto barges that sailed up the Elbe. They were liberated on May 9, close to Terezin.11

After the departure of the prisoner column from Brandhofen, on the morning of the following day, local residents discovered a barn occupied by 33 severely ill prisoners, which had been nailed shut on the orders of SS camp leader Seibold. These prisoners had been without any care for several days. Despite the immediate assistance given to these prisoners, not all of them could be saved. Of the 10 men who were sent to the hospital in Wittichenau, 8 of them died there, and 2 had recovered sufficiently that they were released to return to Poland in June 1945.12

SOURCES Danuta Sawicka’s Al. Niesky—Filia KL Gross-Rosen (z świete relacji byłych więźniów) (Wałbrzych: Państwowe Muzeum Gross-Rosen, 1993) also contains information on the Brandhofen subcamp, as it was directly subordinated to the Niesky camp.

Relevant archival sources can be found at the BA-L (IV 405 AR 2261/66) and the AMGR.

NOTES
5. Röhle, Aufzeichnung, pp. 2–3.
7. SÚA, KT/OVS 24, Death Book II/1945 of the concentration camp Gross-Rosen, death certificate number 8.
8. Röhle, Aufzeichnung, p. 3.

NIMPTSCH
A Gross-Rosen subcamp operated in the town of Nimptsch (present-day Niemcza). The earliest known source information about the camp is from an equipment receipt book (Gerätebuch) dated December 1, 1944.

The data available on the initial transports comes from as late as January 1945. Lists of prisoners prepared for transport from Gross-Rosen to the Nimptsch subcamp have survived. A list dated January 8, 1945, contained 140 names, some of which were crossed out. However, it turns out that at least 1 of the people crossed out was a prisoner at Nimptsch. The other known list, dated January 10, 1945, contained only 10 names.

Information provided by former prisoners shows that everyone had been moved to the camp in one 150-person transport. That was on January 8 or 10, 1945. Prisoners’ accounts are not definite as to the date the transport arrived. However, if the information on one transport is true, then it is more likely that the group arrived on January 10, 1945.

The camp was located outside of town. There were Polish, Czech, and Russian men interned there. There were also two Croats. There were neither youths nor elderly prisoners recorded in the group. The prisoners in Nimptsch ranged from 19 to 55 years old.

The main criterion for the composition of the aforementioned transport was occupation. Therefore, there were tradesmen with various specialties at the camp: cabinetmakers, carpenters, metalworkers, and so on. There were even special prisoners for cooking and medical matters (a doctor and orderly had been designated).

German criminal prisoner Walter Kloss, number 46746, became camp elder (Lagerältester), and Polish prisoner Waclaw Ludwig, number 3069, was camp scribe.

The camp staff was made up of SS men, whose personal information prisoners have not remembered due to their short stay at Nimptsch. Some accounts mention the last name of Jaschke (or Jeschke), who was supposedly the subcamp commandant. He was a young man of around 30 who limped.

Prisoners remember the death of one prisoner from their stay at the Nimptsch camp. There are no known documented cases of abuse of camp prisoners by staff members or prisoner-functionaries.

The prisoners were put to work on strenuous jobs such as finishing the barracks in which they lived. They also disassembled machines being prepared to move away at the “Famo” factory. Prisoners worked seasonally at removing snow in camp and on nearby roads. In late January (probably January 25) 1945, the subcamp prisoners were evacuated on foot to a large Jewish camp operating nearby, known as Langenbielau I.
[aka Reichenbach Sportschule], which was also in the Gross-Rosen camp system. At Langenbielau they formed a separate group of prisoners from the rest of the camp and lived in a fenced barracks with “their own” staff of SS men. They made sure that no communications were possible between the prisoners from Nimpitsch and the previously incarcerated Jews.

At the new camp, the Nimpitsch prisoners mainly worked at building trenches, removing snow, and other tasks. The prisoners regained their freedom on May 8, 1945, when the Langenbielau camp was liberated. Earlier, some of the prisoners, probably sick ones, had been evacuated to other camps located in the Sowie Góry (Owl Mountains) such as the Riese/Dörnhau subcamp.

**OBER-ALTSTADT**

Two forced labor camps (ZAL) for Jewish women were established under the auspices of the Organisation Schmelt in the 1940s in Ober-Altstadt (Horní Staré Město). On March 18, 1944, another 30 women were sent from Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp to the Etrich firm and 100 to the Siemens-Motorwerke. A document dated November 12, 1944, shows that it was a labor camp for Jewish females ages 15 to 30. The women were assigned to work at the Lorenz türfabriken (of whom there were 681 from Poland, 234 from Hungary, 6 Slovaks, 4 Germans, and 1 each from Belgium, the present-day Czech Republic, and Russia). The overwhelming majority of prisoners were Jewish females ages 15 to 30. The women were accommodated in wooden barracks. Cultural evenings that gave them courage and strengthened their Jewish identity were renowned. The SS staff consisted of a female camp commander and a further 33 wardresses, an SS noncommissioned officer, and 4 guards. Before the war ended, the women were used in fortification works. The Red Army liberated the camp on May 9, 1945.

**OBER-HOHENELBE**

The Ober-Hohenenlbe subcamp was located in the town now known as Hořejší Vrchlabi. It was probably established on September 12, 1944. Bogdan Cybulski questions whether this was an independent camp or a labor commando of Parschitz (Trautenau), but Alfred Konecny definitely uses the name of Ober-Hohenelbe (the proper name of the town where the camp was located).

The transport list of 250 Hungarian women sent to Ober-Hohenelbe from Auschwitz on September 12, 1944, shows that it was a labor camp for women. The prisoners were numbered 60231 to 60300 and 61701 to 61880. The camp population on October 27, 1944, was 248 women, who were assigned to work at the Lorenz türfabriken. Two prisoner transports from Auschwitz concentration camp were recorded in the chronology of prisoner transports and numeration in the Gross-Rosen concentration camp under the date of September 12, 1944. The first included 70 prisoners, and the second, 165, for a total of 235 people. The range of numbers of these prisoners corresponds to the numbers of the 250 people who were on the transport list from Auschwitz concentration camp to Ober-Hohenelbe, dated September 12, 1944.

On November 14, 1944, the camp population rose to 400 women when a transport of 152 Jewish women from Hungary and Slovakia was admitted from Auschwitz II-Birknenau (numbers 86772 to 86923). A document dated November 18, 1944,
shows that 400 female prisoners worked at the plant, and the number of people working there was scheduled to increase to 500. Parts for the V-2 (vengeance weapon) were manufactured at the Lorenz factory.

Information collected after the war by the Czech government shows that 450 women were incarcerated in the camp and that it was located in a warehouse hall without living quarters.

The women incarcerated at Ober-Hohenelbe were put to work making radio parts and manufacturing ammunition. One witness recalls: “There were many places to work. My job was gas welding glass bulbs. The bulbs were for aircraft spare parts. My friend worked in another room on that floor, where miniature wires were nickel-plated. A skilled Czech worker always stood there.”

In the prisoners’ living space there was one dark cell in which the women would be locked, if so ordered, for two to three days without food. Such punishments were for “crimes” such as resting during work or talking to the foreman, who was not a prisoner but a hired supervisory employee.

Selections were conducted in the camp. The first selection occurred in the winter by order of the camp commander, but at that time the doctor did not find any women qualified to be taken to Gross-Rosen. Chief doctor Josef Mengele (better known for his activities at Auschwitz) participated in the second and last selection, also at the commander’s request; 10 prisoners were taken away to an unknown place as a result of that selection. They included 1 Hungarian woman; the rest were Polish women between 17 and 25 years of age. “The reason for the selection,” as Elza said, “was to demonstrate that there was a decrease in prisoners at the camp.”

We have no information on medical care at Ober-Hohenelbe in the source material. However, information on the care provided to the prisoners has survived. As with other camps, there is a surviving report, dated March 21, 1945, recording that prisoners with dental conditions were seen on March 8–11. Female prisoner Simon Perl (camp number 60887), who was a dentist by profession, served as the dentist at that time.

A report filed by Ober-Alstadt labor camp informs us that there was no need for any dental assistance in April 1945.

Konieczny reports that May 9, 1945, was the day that the Ober-Hohenelbe camp was liberated. The prisoners were not evacuated from the camp. Information collected after the war by the Czech government states that the Czech government left Ober-Hohenelbe in April 1945. Out of the total population of 150, 138 people left the camp, and 12 were taken to the hospital (there is no explanation for the discrepancy in total numbers). No information on deaths in the camp has been found.

The following information concerns staff members at the camp:

Marie Larischová (born January 5, 1914) joined the SS on August 20, 1944, and was trained to serve as a female SS guard (Aufseherin) at the Lorenz company camp in Hořější Vrchlaby. She was a guard there until April 1945. She testified that there were 400 women in the camp and that initially 14 women guards, later 10, were assigned to watch over them. She received a sentence of one year in prison after the war.

The camp commander was (probably) Elza Havlíková, who was approximately 35 years old. She gave her subordinates orders to mistreat the prisoners. Havlíková beat the prisoners and ordered her subordinates to abuse them.

Pfeifer, a Sudeten German, was the director of the Ober-Hohenelbe subcamp.

NOTES
2. Chronology of prisoner transports and numeration in the Gross-Rosen concentration camp, p. 20, AMGR, DP 6855, transport list of 250 Jewish women, dated September 12, 1944.
3. AMGR, DP 2829.
4. A. Małek, “Praca w filiach KL Gross-Rosen” (typescript).
5. AMGR, DP 7115/3, Erika Lednar.
6. AMGR, DP 7103, accounts by former female guards.

PARSCHNITZ
One of the first forced labor camps (ZAL) for Jewish women under the auspices of the Organisation Schnelt was established in Parschnitz (Pořeší) in the summer of 1940. In 1941, the second camp, also for Jewish women and girls, was opened. (Both were located in the spinning mills of two German textile companies.)

Between March 12 and March 18, 1944, both of these camps were taken over by the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. Later, they were transformed into one of the largest Gross-Rosen subcamps for women. In March 1944, the Gross-Rosen commander, Hassebroek, commanded SS-Obersturmführer Fritz Ritterbusch to establish the SS-Special Detail (Sonderkommando) Trautenau in Parschnitz. His residence was located in-
side the camp in Parschnitz. He was in command of seven subcamps including (Ober-) Hohenelbe and Liebau, which were outside the then Sudentenland Gau.

The women in Parschnitz had to work in the spinning mills of the German firms Aloys Haase; Gebrüder Walzel, C.G.; Johann Ettrich, K.G. in Trautenau; and later for the Berlin General Electric Company (AEG). Large transports primarily of young Jewish women from Hungary (after they had been selected in Auschwitz II-Birkenau) went to Parschnitz. At the end of September, the camp reached its largest number of prisoners: 2,164 female inmates. It also functioned as a quarantine camp for prisoners who were to be sent to other camps in the area. Small transports from other Gross-Rosen subcamps (e.g., Sackisch, Christianstadt, and Wiesau) arrived here between the autumn and February 1945.

The majority of the wardresses treated the Jewish women brutally, as did the civilian personnel in the factories. There were often scenes of terrible beatings and torture. But there were also other cases of assistance and further expressions of solidarity and humanity, above all by the Czechs who were “totally deployed” there as well. In the spring of 1945, the prisoners were put to work on preparing fortifications. The statistics show that at the end of 1944, among the 1,356 women, 704 were from Hungary, 646 from Poland, 3 from Bohemia, and 1 from Slovakia, and 40 were French and Dutch. The overwhelming majority were Jewish women aged between 15 and 40 (there were among them girls younger than 15). The number of those who died was 17, the largest number in the Trautenau camp complex (although the records are incomplete).

There is a song by the Polish Jewish women that has survived. It is called “The Ballad of the Punishment Camp” (Die Ballade über das Straflager). The composer was F. Grynszpa. The Red Army liberated Parschnitz on May 9, 1945. There were 48 wardresses in the camp. The camp commander, Else Hawlik, was notorious for her brutality. Of the more than 50 former SS wardresses that were convicted by a Czechoslovak court in Jičín between 1945 and 1946, there was only 1 who had been in Parschnitz. Ritterbusch, the former SS commander in Trautenau, was arrested in the Soviet Occupation Zone in Germany. He died in 1947 in a People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) Special Camp in Mühlberg.

**SOURCES**


Well-known professor of German studies in Olomouc Ludvík Václavek has devoted his attention to a specific topic, a play created by Jewish women from Hungary in the Schatzlar camp: “Lágr je sen? (Literární dokument z koncentračního tábora při židovské přednášce z roku 1945),” in *Stati o námecké literaturě vzniklé v českých zemích* (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 1991).

Basic sources and transport lists of the prisoners from the Gross-Rosen subcamps in northeast Bohemia are located in the SÚA in Prague, with copies in the AG-T (Terezín Memorials). The most important ones are the files of the Special People’s Court in Jičín 1945–1946 (Criminal Trials against the Former Wardresses). Finally, mention must be made of the firm archives at Texlen Trutnov; its chief at the time, Vladimír Wolf, provided access in the 1970s for me and Ludmila Chádková to the most important sources on the camps in the Trautenau area referred to in the files of the German textile firms for the years 1940 to 1945. Nevertheless, the sources are inadequate.

Miroslav Kryl
trans. Stephen Pallavicini

**PETERSWALDAU**

Peterswaldau (present-day Pieszyce) is a city in the Polish Eulengebirge (Góry Sowie) about 60 kilometers (37 miles) to the south of Breslau. During World War II, Peterswaldau was part of the Prussian province of Lower Saxony; there was a Gross-Rosen subcamp for female prisoners in the city, which was administered by the commander of the Langenbielau I subcamp.

Peterswaldau is first mentioned in May 1942 as an Organisation Schmelt camp (a so-called Zwangsarbeitslager für Juden [ZALfJ]). At this time the women worked in the Ferdinand Haase spinning and weaving mill. Around April 1, 1944, shortly after 10 women were brought from the ZALfJ in Sagan, which had been dissolved, to the Peterswaldau camp, the camp was transferred from the Organisation Schmelt to the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. Transports arrived with female prisoners from Auschwitz—a transport of 500 women in May is documented and another between August and September of 1944, although Monika Schmidt states the transports to the Peterswaldau camp consisted of between 10 and 300 women. The transports consisted almost solely of Hungarian Jewish women. As Isabell Sprenger states, these women were often very young, around 20, and arrived at the camp in small family units consisting of female relatives (sisters, mothers, cousins, and aunts).

In the beginning, there were around 370 women in the camp, but the numbers quickly increased to 1,500. It is highly likely that for many women the camp was a transit camp on the way to the Langenbielau subcamp. The roughly 100 women who worked for the Ferdinand Haase spinning and weaving textile factory (Textilfabrik [Spinnerei und Weberei]
von Ferdinand Haase) were accommodated in a room in the factory. The large majority of the women, who produced detonators for the munitions firm Diehl GmbH & Co., were initially accommodated in the local castle and then in additional rooms of the former Zwanziger Weaving Mill. Margit Schulz, one of the prisoners, who was transferred from Auschwitz to the Peterswaldau camp, reported that between 110 and 120 women slept in one room in the weaving mill and that many of the high windows were without glass. Many of the women slept two each in 60-centimeter wide (24-inch-wide) three-tiered bunk beds so as to share their thin blankets. Schmidt, in her essay “Zwangsarbeit und Lagerhaft als lebenslanges Trauma,” writes that on the first and second floors of the weaving mill there were large areas with three-tiered bunk beds for between 200 and 250 people. The few toilets in the factory yard could only be used by the women during the day, and at night they had to use buckets. There are only three reported deaths in the camp, notwithstanding the unhygienic conditions, two from typhus.

The women were guarded exclusively by female SS personnel. In May 1944, Else Hein, the longest-serving female supervisor, was appointed commander of Peterswaldau. There are also records of another supervisor named Slanke. An SS female supervisor was also to be appointed dog squad leader. The SS maintained a relentlessly strict regime—prisoner beatings were the order of the day. One prisoner described the female supervisors’ daily brutality as follows:

The SS women beat us often, they walked around, and the guards were standing and sitting by the door. And if someone had to go urgently, we were only human, young women, we just had to go out. We begged them: “We have to go to the toilet.” Then they beat us around the head and said, “Piss off, you Jewish pig!” and then they came out to make sure that we were quick and got back to work. Those are memories. The card, that we had, was called a “Scheisskarte,” pardon, and just as in a bus or electric tram, we made a hole, when we were outside, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

There are many prisoner reports on the working conditions in Peterswaldau, particularly the company Diehl GmbH & Co. Schultz has reported on the assembly of detonators:

[T]hey were like nails, about two centimeters (three-quarters of an inch) long, the head was in the middle, just as a nail has its head at the end. I had to mill off a piece from the nail; we were given some sort of device to measure each little piece, whether it was right or not, and if it wasn’t we had to call the forewoman to correct the machine. It squirted, and squirted, oil, tri [trichloroethyl—a solvent]—on the clothes and the iron filings. The iron was a very strong metal that was milled and there were lots of filings. We had to clean up every Saturday, clean the whole machine, and remove from it the week’s filings. We had to wash our dresses and hang them up to dry above our beds during the cold of the night. Often they were not dry in the morning. Then we had to get up and put on our wet dresses—there was no other way. We had to be very clean, because the oil was squirting and burned our skin.

Former prisoner Helga Wolfowicz stated that “each time when I put aside my work magnifying glass, the foreman came with a hammer and hit me on the fingers.” Many other prisoners, including Henia Golombiarska, Frieda Poremba, Mady D., Helene Maringer, Rose Besser, Helen Preiss, and Rose Futter, have described similar unbearable working conditions—for example, in the zinc plating area where the prisoners were permanently exposed to poisonous gases, the women lived in constant fear of the frequent selections when women who could no longer work would be taken to Auschwitz and murdered. There was an infirmary in the camp with a female doctor and nursing sister.

Bella Gutterman, who has researched the everyday life of the Jewish prisoners in the Gross-Rosen subcamps, states that the Peterswaldau subcamp had intensive artistic and cultural activities. There were cultural evenings so that the operetta Die Fledermaus was performed with permission of the camp commander. Poetry written by the inmates has survived. Truda Gutman, a prisoner, writes in her poems on the dehumanization process that the prisoners underwent: “Der Hass gegen sich selbst unter uns/Fusstritte und Stösse, Schreie und Schläge/Von der Menschlichkeit ist in uns nichts mehr geblieben” (The self-hatred/kicks, shoving, screams and beatings/Nothing remained in us of our humanity).

The camp was maintained until May 6, 1945. In the last weeks of the war, the women were repeatedly taken to nearby Reichenbach where they had to clean up after bombing raids. On May 7, the women were given the order, probably at all three work sites, to take the machines apart and prepare them for relocation. But it was too late. On May 8–9, 1945, the Soviet Army reached the Peterswaldau subcamp and liberated the women.

The history of the Peterswaldau subcamp was reworked in the years following 1977. In 1977, Karl Diehl, the owner of the munitions factory Diehl GmbH & Co., where the women had to do the forced labor, was given honorary citizenship of the city of Nürnberg for his outstanding work for the benefit of the city of Nürnberg and “for his ‘life’s work.’” Massive protests by journalists and female former forced laborers resulted in debate on Diehl’s work for which in 1943 he was recommended for the War Service Cross First Class (Kriegsdienstkreuz Erster Klasse). This debate did not prevent the awarding of honorary citizenship. It was probably due to this public protest that the family firm declared that it was prepared to make contact with the 180 surviving Jewish women from the camp. In 1999, before the government regulated the payment of compensation for forced labor in Germany, the company paid to each of the women between 10,000
A birthday card, in the shape of a Star of David, presented to Rose Hersz by fellow prisoners at the Peterswaldau subcamp of Gross-Rosen, July 22, 1944. The card reads: "From early morning we have carried the sweet obligation. To congratulate you on your birthday. What should we wish you? If you were to have a little chocolate cake today instead of the nuts and bolts [of the workshop], that would improve your spirits. Oh, now we know [what to wish you]! We wish that one week from today you will be with your loved ones and in your own place; that you will be able to be happy and free and to live a renewed life.”

USHMM WS #15932, COURTESY OF ROSE GRINBAUM FUTTER
and 15,000 Deutsche Marks (DM) each as compensation. The women in return declared that they would not pursue any legal claims against the company.


The collections in U.S.H.M.M. in Washington, DC, include the following documents on the history of the Peterswaldau subcamp: photograph #1 16602 (a .50 RM piece of scrip from the Gross-Rosen concentration camp that was given to Hanka Granek during her imprisonment at the Peterswaldau subcamp of Gross-Rosen); RG-10.174 (Helen Preiss Collection: Tagebuchnotizen einer jungen Jüdin zu ihrer Zeit in Peterswaldau); RG-50.483*0001 (Oral History Interview with Helen Preiss regarding her time in Peterswaldau); and Acc.1995.A.619 (Bronislawa Radzik, “A Memoir Relating to the Experiences in Sosnowiec and Peterswaldau”).

The YV Memorial contains the following statements on the Peterswaldau Camp: Rosa F. 20.9.1964, Signatur 03/1684; Richarda W. 25.2.1960, Signatur 03/1660; and Hilda L. 13.7.1945, Signatur 015/2298.


Evelyn Zegenhagen
trans. Stephen Pallavicini

NOTES

1. AZIH, Report Nr. 2180 by Sylvia Bachner. For details of humiliating selection of the female prisoners when the administration of the camp was taken over by Gross-Rosen, see the report by Chana Z. in Monika Schmidt, “Zwangarbeit und Lagerhaft als lebenslanges Trauma. Erfahrungen in Langenbielau und Peterswaldau,” DaHe 15 (November 1999): 178.


7. Ibid., p. 87.


Reichenau

The Reichenau subcamp came into being in March 1944 upon the order of the Gesellschaft für Technische und Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung mbH (Association for Technical and Economic Development), which manufactured radio and radar equipment. The initial transport of 199 prisoners (1 died en route) arrived at Reichenau (now Rychnov) from Gross-Rosen on March 14, 1944. The prisoners were put into two barracks located near the factory; the SS staff occupied a third barracks.

SS-Hauptscharführer Ernst Braun served as commander of the subcamp. As described by Jan Kosiński:

[Braun] was a slim, tall man with a long face, thirty-six to forty years old. He was always dressed up in a pressed SS-man’s uniform and high boots polished shiny as a mirror. Clean-shaven and perfumed, he himself was in charge of reports and the barrack chiefs. He was all over the place: at roll calls, in the barracks, in the labor commandos and at mail inspection. . . . Braun drank . . . and then you had to stay out of his sight. . . . Quick-tempered, obstinate, rigorous and impervious to any sentiments, he was inhuman and evil. It was he who thought up the most diverse punishments for prisoners, such as standing long hours in the cold, leap-frogging, wallowing on the ground regardless of the weather, extra work, continually spying on them, beating, which led to many deaths because there was no medical care, constant suspicion and searches.1

The camp staff numbered 25 people in November 1944. The camp held 100 prisoners at that time, and an increase to 400 was planned.

A new transport arrived at Reichenau every month. Prisoners were brought in groups of several to several dozen.

For the first few months, some of the prisoners worked on expanding the camp. But the specialists, the electricians, and lathe operators were assigned to work at the factory, which the prisoners called “civilian” because it was outside the camp. In July some prisoners were moved to the factory’s newly erected division on camp premises. The prisoners put to work at the factory received vouchers worth around 4 Reichsmark (RM) for their labor and could use them to buy food in the camp canteen. But they could not buy anything except for cigarettes and vegetable salad, the ingredients of which the prisoners could not identify.

Some prisoners sabotaged production, doing such things as badly soldering the ends of connections or turning parts that were too big on the lathe. Those who were caught were transferred to a penal company or a construction commando. When the camp expansion was finished, the construction commando bored a tunnel to connect the factory division in the camp with the mother plant.

A group of approximately 100 prisoners worked extending and replacing railroad tracks. In the spring, prisoners of various nationalities from labor camps in the area joined the track extension work. SS men watched both groups of prisoners to make sure they did not communicate with each other.

Other prisoners worked on various transport details; in the garage, tailor, and cobbler shops; and in the factory’s design office. Braun also used construction brigade prisoners to build his house in Pelkowitz (Pelkowice), a town located almost 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) from the camp.

In February or March 1945, when the front was getting nearer, the prisoners were sent to build fortifications, barricades, and trenches. According to a former prisoner: “Walking about in the mountains and digging ditches, even though it was getting warmer outside, was becoming an increasingly difficult job. We were already very exhausted. Our column looked pitiful coming back to the camp from work. Even though the guards would urge us on, we would spread out into small groups. Those who were a bit stronger helped those who could not go on, so we saved one another, as we sensed that freedom was at hand.”

Because of breaks in materials deliveries, the pace of work in the factory was slowed down. The prisoners were assigned to cleanup work more and more frequently.

There was no kitchen at Reichenau; food was brought in from the factory canteen located almost a kilometer (0.6 mile) from the camp.

Maintaining cleanliness was a problem for the prisoners. A washroom with running water, a shower, and several bathtubs was built in the third quarter of 1944. Prisoners had to wash in the morning and evening, but they did not get any soap. Underwear was changed no more than once a month. Clothes were not washed. The prisoners were escorted to the delousing station in Gablonz, a town located several kilometers from camp. Prisoners waited outside of the building for their things, after which they put on wet clothes, with lice in most cases, and returned to camp on foot. Their clothes would dry out during the long march. The trek took all day and for many prisoners ended in sickness at best.

There was no infirmary at Reichenau for the first few months; sick people were taken to the main camp. The commander would make the selection. A sickroom was set up in late 1944 due to the high death rate.

The prisoners did not make any escape attempts, except for one that was unsuccessful. A 19-year-old Russian prisoner tried to escape during work on the night shift at the factory; but a guard spotted him and turned him over to the commander, who ordered him shot. Many prisoners recall that a resistance movement existed, primarily initiated by prisoners.
from the Warsaw Uprising and Auschwitz concentration camp. One of the group's important achievements was getting hold of a radio and passing on the news they heard to their friends. Poles were the largest ethnic group at Reichenau. There were also Czechs, Frenchmen, Belgians, Russians, Germans, two Ukrainians, two Jews, a Norwegian, and an Italian. There were no major conflicts among the prisoners over ethnic differences, although there were instances of mutual complaints, accusations, and resentments.

Beginning in January 1945, preparations were under way at the main camp of Gross-Rosen for moving headquarters to Reichenau. On February 10, camp commander Hasselbrook and most of headquarters staff moved to Reichenau, where they stayed for a week. The camp records and prisoner files were also moved and were destroyed in late April or early May. Evacuation transports moved through the subcamp beginning in 1945. An evacuation column of approximately 1,600 Auschwitz prisoners reached the camp in early February. Unfortunately, we do not know what happened to the prisoners later. Gross-Rosen’s Hirschberg subcamp was evacuated in late February; the prisoners reached Reichenau on foot. The group included prisoners evacuated from Auschwitz. They rested the night, then were loaded into railway coal cars and sent to Buchenwald concentration camp, where they arrived on March 7. The transport was joined by approximately 90 prisoners from Reichenau. They rode in uncovered railway cars, with no food; many probably died along the way, as the list of newly admitted prisoners to Buchenwald contains the names of only 9 Reichenau prisoners.

The Reichenau camp was ordered evacuated the night of May 7–8. In all probability, 18 sick people who could not walk were left behind. The column set out toward Jablonec. The prisoners had covered several kilometers when they were stopped by a German army detachment and ordered to go back. They reached the camp in late afternoon of that same day. Some of the staff disappeared along the way. The prisoners were locked in the barracks. Czech underground fighters arrived at the camp on May 9. It turned out that the rest of the staff had fled during the night. The sick people were given medical help and food.

**SOURCES** The basis of this entry is Dorota Sula’s study on selected Gross-Rosen subcamps, Filie KL Gross-Rosen (zbiór artykułów) (Walbrzych, 2001). The Reichenau camp is discussed on pp. 124–146.

Archival materials housed at the AMGR include orders of camp authorities as well as former prisoner accounts, surveys, recollections, and correspondence.

**NOTES**

2. AMGR, 5758/731/DP, Henryk Uchman, “Gdy byłem w Reichenau.”

**RIESE COMPLEX**

The code name Riese applied to the Riese construction project built from 1943 to 1945 at Niederschlesien (present-day Dolny Śląsk in Lower Silesia, Poland); and the subcamp complex of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp formed to provide manpower for the Riese project. In official terminology, that labor camp complex was named Arbeitslager Riese.

As a result of the German army’s deteriorating situation on the Eastern Front in 1943, the Third Reich’s high command began to realize that Hitler’s headquarters (Wolfschanze) near Rastenburg in East Prussia (present-day Kętrzyn, in northeastern Poland) might be threatened by military operations. They considered the possibility of evacuating the headquarters. In order to keep the military and political command centers working safely and undisturbed, another headquarters had to be readied, at a considerable distance from the front lines.

Considering the operational capacities of aviation at the time, the new quarters would have to safeguard staff operations, primarily against air attacks. Security would be provided by putting staff in suitable underground shelters. These would house Hitler’s Headquarters (FHQ), the Army High Command (OKH), the Air Force High Command (OKL), the Navy High Command (OKM), Himmler’s headquarters (RFSS), and the headquarters of the Reich Foreign Ministry (RAM).

The Germans chose a location in a range of small, almost entirely wooded mountains, rising up to 811 meters (2,661 feet) above sea level, in the northwestern part of the Eulengebirge (Góry Sowie, the Owl Mountains, in the Sudetens in southwestern Poland).

A total of six complexes was to come into being in the Eulengebirge region; they were to be built above and below ground and have the necessary technological infrastructure. Reinforced-concrete residential, office, and service buildings of various sizes were built on the surface on the mountainsides. Tunnels leading to the main chamber excavations were bored in the mountainsides. They were to be lined with reinforced concrete and also house office spaces and probably living spaces as well. The entire project was to be fitted with the necessary communications facilities and have a suitable roadway system, water, and electrical power supply.

The headquarters was also to include Förstenstein Castle near the county seat of Waldenburg (present-day Ksiaż Castle within the Walbrzych city limits), suitably adapted and furnished with an underground shelter. The castle is approximately 20 kilometers (12.4 miles) northwest of the main Eulengebirge structures.

The Industrie Gemeinschaft Schlesien AG (Silesian Industrial Corporation, Inc.) was contracted to do the construction and excavation work. The work commenced in the late autumn of 1943. The manpower was initially provided by forced laborers from the Soviet Union and Poland, as well as by Italian prisoners of war (POWs). In late November and early December 1943, four camps that could accommodate
5,200 people were set up for them. More camps were being prepared; the intent was to put 15,000 laborers to work on the Riese project. The outbreak of a typhus epidemic slowed the work down so much that changes had to be made, both in the project’s management and the labor force. Initially, no concentration camp prisoners were put to work. However, that option was already being considered. It was finally implemented in April 1944, when the Organisation Todt (OT) took over the project and began using prisoners from Gross-Rosen, even while keeping the forced laborers and POWs on the job. A special Senior Construction Directorate (Oberbauleitung) within the OT, code-named “Riese,” supervised the prisoners’ work.

SS-Hauptsturmführer Albert Lütkemeyer, born June 17, 1911, was the commander of the Riese labor camp complex. He joined the Nazi Party on March 1, 1933, and the Allgemeine–SS on September 1, 1939. He was decorated with the Iron Cross 2nd Class. He served at Esterwegen concentration camp in 1934 and at Mauthausen and Neuenburg in 1935, with the Riese project.

The prisoners from Gross-Rosen soon constituted the most numerous group of laborers in the Riese project, and all of them were Jewish. The first transports arrived in late April 1944. The prisoners were quartered in a weaving mill in Tannhausen (present-day Jedlinka, a section of the city of Głuszyca). It belonged to the Websky, Hartschmann & Wiesen company of Wüstewaldersdorff (now Walim). The camp at the weaving mill was the first one to belong to the Riese complex. It also housed Riese’s central headquarters, as well as the quarters of Commandant Lütkemeyer and other personnel in management positions at the camp. The central food and clothing warehouse was also located there.

At first, the prisoners were primarily used to build more camps. Because of the magnitude of the construction project and the extensive area of mountains it involved, not one but over a dozen camps were constructed. They were usually named after nearby towns or other place-names.

The following camps were part of the Riese complex: Dörnhau, Erlenbusch, Falkenberg (Eule), Fürstenstein, Kaltwasser, Lärche, Märzbachtal, Säufers (Säufersgraben), Schotterwerk (bahnhof Ober Wüstegiersdorf), Tannhausen (V Lager), Wólfsberg, Wüstegiersdorf, Wüstewaldersdorf (Stenzelberg), and Zentralrevier Tannhausen.

Besides the camps listed above, some sources also mention more camps in the Eulengebirge region that were reported to be part of the Riese complex. There were three camps named after nearby towns or other place-names.

There were three camps named Dörnhau, Erlenbusch, Falkenberg (Eule), Fürstenstein, Kaltwasser, Lärche, Märzbachtal, Säufers (Säufersgraben), Schotterwerk (bahnhof Ober Wüstegiersdorf), Tannhausen (V Lager), Wólfsberg, Wüstegiersdorf, Wüstewaldersdorf (Stenzelberg), and Zentralrevier Tannhausen. However, no information on these camps has been uncovered.

Based on incomplete data, it has been established that approximately 13,000 prisoners lived at the camps belonging to Riese. Over 4,900 of them died.


Records relevant to this camp complex may be found in AMGR, WAP-W, BA-K, and BA-L.

Piotr Kruszynski

**NOTES**

1. BA-K, N 1514.

2. WAP-W, Records Collection, Wrocław Regency Division I, sygn. 8303, vols. 2–3, letter from official doctor Dr. Sommerfeld of the National Health Agency in Walbrzych (Waldenburg) to the director of the company’s building inspectorate (Genossenschaftsbauinspektion), dated January 13, 1944.


4. WAP-W, Records Collection, Wrocław Regency Division I, vols. 24–28, letter from Dr. Kaiser of the National Health Agency in Walbrzych (Waldenburg) to the director of the company’s building inspectorate (Genossenschaftsbauinspektion), dated February 9, 1944.


7. WAP-W, Records Collection, Wrocław Regency Division I, vol. 77, letter from Dr. Kaiser of the National Health Agency in Dzierżoniow (Reichenbach/Eulengebirge) to the Wrocław Regency President, dated May 5, 1944.


10. Ibid., pp. 150, 152.

RIESE/DÖRNHAU

A Gross-Rosen/Riese subcamp was established in June 1944 in the buildings of a former carpet factory in Dörnhau (now Kolce). The prisoners were Jews, nationals of various countries.

On June 9, 1944, a transport of 250 prisoners from the Tannhausen camp arrived at the subcamp. On July 15, 40 prisoners were moved from Tannhausen to Dörnhau. The average daily population of the camp ran into several hundred in mid-1944, rising to approximately 1,400 in 1945.

SS-Unterscharführer Wolf held the post of camp commander until the end of 1944. His successor’s name is unknown.

The prisoners initially worked felling trees and building a road and a narrow-gauge railway. Butzer und Holzmann AG was in charge of the work; it was evacuated to Linz in 1945. The prisoners dug tunnels on the southern slopes of Säufer Höhen (Osówka) Mountain. The work was done in three galleries at various elevations. The total length of the excavations accounted for in the complex was 1,700 meters (1,859 yards).

The prisoners also built projects above ground directly over the tunnels or nearby (approximately 1 kilometer or 0.6 miles). The work at the “Siłownia” and “Kasyno” projects was the most advanced.

Some of the prisoners were assigned to workshops, where they straightened and assembled sections of the narrow-gauge railway tracks, which were then loaded onto freight cars and taken away. They also unloaded freight cars and did other routine jobs, straightening things up.

Besides the aforementioned company, both Artur Becker Tiefbau AG of Berlin and Krause, Schallhorn und Eule used prisoner labor. The work sites and numbers of prisoners assigned to projects varied as needed by the companies.

The completed parts of the installation began to be dismantled in January 1945. In an entry made at Dörnhau, dated April 1945, a prisoner wrote in his diary:

Today I worked in another group—under a Magyar [Hungarian] in a tunnel, in gallery no. 4. We’re dismantling the tunnel fittings—ripping out huge, long, heavy pipes. We carry them out and put them outside the tunnel. A truck comes by every hour and we load the scrap onto them. The tunnel is big, damp and cold. . . . We have one hour’s rest over twelve hours of work. Many of us have accidents of different kinds every day. We get crushed by iron beams, pipes fall on our legs, or we faint under their weight, but if we’re able, we keep on moving and carry the scrap, so as not to faint and be brought round by a gun butt or crowbar.¹

Beginning in October 1944, the camp started serving as a collective hospital (Revier) for sick prisoners brought in from other Riese complex camps. Almost all the sick prisoners working in the Owl Mountains passed through this camp. There was no medical care at all, and the SS men called it a camp for the dying (Krepiierungslager). The ground and second floor were for the sick; the third floor only was occupied by prisoners who still went to work. From March 19 to April 10, 1945, 416 prisoners died in the camp.

Abram Kajzer, a former prisoner of the Erlenbusch camp, stated that the prisoners of that subcamp were evacuated to Dörnhau in March because of a typhus epidemic. We do know that the last prisoner transport sent from one camp to the other was on April 21, 1945. A transport of 187 prisoners from another Gross-Rosen subcamp, Bad Warmbrunn, arrived at Dörnhau on April 14. The next day another transport from Bad Warmbrunn was admitted; the names of only 13 prisoners in that transport have been successfully identified. Also, a prisoner recollects that three days later most of the prisoners who had come from Bad Warmbrunn were sent to another camp.

Besides one account, we know nothing of any escapes from this camp. In an entry dated April 7, 1945, Kajzer wrote:

By chance, I learned that there were two prisoners in our camp, a Pole and a Russian, who had escaped from forced labor a year ago, but were caught four weeks later and put in our camp as punishment. . . . I decided to see the two prisoners and persuade them to escape with me. I had thought the plan out in detail and imagined that it would be best to escape with them, as they knew the local terrain and would know where to go. . . . First I woke up Kola the Russian, then Piotr the Pole. . . . I had no hope that they’d agree to my crazy idea, so instead of suggesting that we escape together, I asked them to lend me an axe. . . . I approached the barbed wire carefully, raised the axe and cut the wire along the fence. My hands trembling, I bent back the wire, stooped down and quickly went towards freedom, which had been so difficult to regain.²

The two prisoners referred to by Kajzer joined in, but we do not know what happened to them afterward. Kajzer managed to save himself.

The camp was liberated the night of May 8–9. Some of the prisoners who still had some strength left the camp immediately after being liberated. The most gravely ill remained there. A hospital for prisoners was set up in the former camp.

SOURCES See the Riese Complex overview.

NOTES
2. Ibid., pp. 177–179.
The Erlenbusch subcamp was part of the Riese labor camp complex created in the Eulengebirge range (later Góry Sowie [Owl Mountains] in the Central Sudetes) in conjunction with the construction of an underground headquarters in that region for Hitler and the Third Reich's high command. The camp was established as a result of an agreement between Gross-Rosen and the Riese project's main contractor, the Organisation Todt (OT), concerning the provision of necessary labor. All of the camps in the Riese complex were under the command of the Gross-Rosen headquarters.

The camp was established on the outskirts of the village of Erlenbusch (later Olszyniec), in a meadow of about 1 hectare (2.5 acres) below the Bad Charlottenbrunn (later Jedlina Zdrój)–Schweidnitz (later Świdnica) railway line across from the junction of tracks running from Tannhausen (later Jedlinka) to Hausdorf (later Jugowice) and from the city of Waldenburg (later Walbrzych) to Erlenbusch.1

It is not known who built the camp or when it was built. Due to the absence of sources, it is impossible to precisely establish the date of the construction of the camp. In all likelihood, it was operating by May 27, 1944.2 The population of the Erlenbusch subcamp is also unknown. It was probably one of the smaller camps of the Riese complex and numbered around 500 prisoners. It housed only Jews, chiefly from Hungary and Poland. Based on the 42 camp numbers of Erlenbusch prisoners that have been established, it is understood that the camp included prisoners who were recorded in the Gross-Rosen concentration camp files on May 24 and June 8, 1944 (from transports of Hungarian Jews), approximately August 25 and September 20 (Polish Jews from the Łódź ghetto), and October 16 (Polish Jews from the Krakau-Plaszow concentration camp).3 The size of the transports is unknown. Although all the groups that came from Auschwitz originally, only the May transport went directly from there to Erlenbusch; the others were transfers from other Gross-Rosen subcamps in Eulengebirge.

The earliest description of the Erlenbusch subcamp refers to the second half of 1944. It comes from the account of Henryk Włodarczak, a Polish forced laborer at Erlenbusch who had been put to work as an assistant narrow-gauge railway engineer.4 According to his account, the “Jewish camp” was made up of several large wooden barracks as well as round plywood cabins called “Finnish huts.” There were two barracks in the lower part of camp. One of them housed the kitchen and food warehouse; the other housed the camp headquarters. The camp leader (Lagerführer), an officer with a light limp, also lived in that barrack, as well as at least one other person from the camp management. The guards who watched the prisoners lived somewhat higher up in two or three more barracks. There were bunk beds in the guards' barracks. The prisoners were quartered in the huts, of which there were, according to Włodarczak, “quite a lot, more than just a few, and they stood in rows.” All the campgrounds were fenced. The section inhabited by the prisoners was surrounded by a double barbed-wire fence and was very heavily guarded by watchmen with dogs. The guards were armed with small-caliber Italian rifles with bayonets. Although the Germans made communication between the forced laborers and the prisoners working on the tracks difficult, it was possible. Włodarczak spoke German, so he was able to understand prisoners who spoke Yiddish. He remembers that they asked for fuel. Although there were stoves in all the hut barracks, the prisoners had nothing to burn in them. The forced laborers working on the narrow-gauge locomotives would give them briquettes. Unfortunately, that help did not change the situation much. The hut walls had no thermal insulation, and even when the prisoners could get a bit of fuel and burn it in the stoves, it was only a bit warmer in the cabins and only for a very short time. In general, in Włodarczak's opinion, the prisoners lived under horrendous conditions and froze terribly in the wintertime.

There was a fire in the camp in February or March 1945. It broke out in the large headquarter barracks. From there it spread to huts, which burned down. Włodarczak thought that there were not any prisoners in camp anymore, although he does not know exactly when they were transported out. (The witness came down with typhus in December 1944 and was sent to the hospital for infectious diseases in Wistewaltersdorf [later Walim]. He returned to Erlenbusch several weeks later, shortly before the fire.)

Two accounts by former camp prisoners concern the early spring of 1945. Abram Kajzer wrote that he had been brought to Erlenbusch from the Dönhau labor camp in late February–early March 1945.5 In his opinion, there were approximately 500 prisoners living in the camp at the time. New arrivals were deloused and got clean clothes and blankets. They were quartered in barracks; the rooms were clean and had board beds. There was a bathhouse with hot water in the camp. Kajzer was at Erlenbusch for only a month, after which he returned to Dönhau because of a typhus epidemic.

Former prisoner Arnold Mostowicz wrote in his published recollections that he had come to Erlenbusch from Dönhau labor camp in early April 1945.6 The camp was situated in open country and was made up of five new barracks that had been painted green. The new boards of the barracks still smelled of the pine forest. There was a group of several dozen prisoners on site who were erecting the barracks. According to Mostowicz, he was in the first major group that arrived at the camp. They slept on straw mattresses stuffed with wood shavings, just like the ones at Dönhau, although there were no fleas or lice in them. He described this new and clean camp, which had been set up at the very end of the war, as an “astounding phenomenon.” The sanitary conditions at Erlenbusch were also better than at other camps in the spring of 1945. The prisoners could wash up every evening there in the bathhouses with hot water.7 Mostowicz also returned to the Dönhau labor camp after a short time.

There is no information on the infirmary at Erlenbusch. For a brief time in April 1945, Mostowicz served as an orderly.8 No information exists on the total number of illnesses
and deaths. It is known that prisoners in serious condition were taken away to the infirmary in Dörnhau. The surviving fragmentary records show that there were eight transports between the hospital and the camp between December 6, 1944, and May 7, 1945, in which there were 27 prisoners: for five transports totaling 17 prisoners, it was clearly recorded that they had been sent from the camp to the infirmary, while the only information provided for the remaining transports was the name of the camp, without the specific destination. The dates listed for the transports are also interesting: the first one was on December 6, 1944, and involved 1 prisoner. That was the only transfer that year. The next 4 occurred between January 25 and 29, 1945, and involved 19 prisoners.

The last three, involving 7 prisoners, were on April 21, May 3, and May 7. The surviving information shows that 7 prisoners died at the Dörnhau hospital between March 19 and May 8, 1945, and 3 more died on May 3, 1945, during the transport from Erlenbusch to Dörnhau. It is striking that the number of sick prisoners sent back to the Dörnhau hospital was so small and that the number of deaths recorded was relatively low, all the more so because we know that there had been a typhus epidemic at Erlenbusch among the forced laborers who lived under incomparably better conditions. In light of these facts, it seems probable that the typhus epidemic also affected the prisoners at Erlenbusch subcamp. Besides the situation at the front at that time, it also could have been the reason for their transport out of the camp around mid-February 1945. On the other hand, the sick people sent to the Dörnhau infirmary in the aforementioned last three groups were from the new “settlement” of the camp.

We know little about the SS staff at Erlenbusch subcamp. An SS company from the Gross-Rosen concentration camp served guard duty. We know the names of two SS men: SS-Hauptscharführer Bernhard Rückner, born March 21, 1896. He was a staff member of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp from August 26, 1941, to December 28, 1944; besides Erlenbusch, he was also at the Falkenberg labor camp for a time. Herman Schöps, born August 2, 1901, was a German. His dates of his stay at the Erlenbusch subcamp are unknown, but it is known that he was also at other Gross-Rosen concentration camp subcamps, in Breslau, Dyhernfurth, Bad Warmbrunn, and Hirschberg.

The prisoners worked at the railway siding near the camp, unloading and reloading building materials. They also maintained the narrow-gauge railway between the siding at Erlenbusch and construction sites in the town of Jauernd (later Jugowice Górze) as well as on the slope of the Wolfsberg (later Wlodarcz Mountain).

They also did excavating work for the construction of the water supply system on the slope of the Saal Berg (later Jedlińska Kopa).

In the spring of 1945, the prisoners worked at the construction site in Jauernd and also near the camp, loading construction and engineering equipment onto railroad cars for evacuation. All of that occurred under conditions of severe disorganization. Unfortunately, there is no clear-cut information about the end of the Erlenbusch subcamp’s operation. According to accounts referred to above, it seems that the camp was first evacuated in February 1945. Then new groups of prisoners were brought in, probably as early as March or April. At least some of them were transferred to the Dörnhau camp in early May. It is not known whether the Erlenbusch subcamp then ceased to exist or whether some prisoners remained there until war’s end and were liberated.

Schöps, an SS guard at Erlenbusch, was tried after the war and was sentenced to two years’ imprisonment on September 29, 1947. He was freed after serving his sentence.


Archival material on the Erlenbusch subcamp can be found at the following locations: AK-IPN in Warsaw and AMGR in Wałbrzych.

**NOTES**


2. WAP-W, Records Collection, Wrocław Regency Division 1, 8303, vols. 99–100, letter from Dr. Kaiser, camp administration officer in charge of sanitary supervision over camps in the Eulengebirge region, to the Wrocław Regency President, dated May 27, 1944.

3. Files of former Gross-Rosen concentration camp prisoners recreated at the Gross-Rosen Museum.


RIESE/FALKENBERG [AKA EULE]

The Falkenberg subcamp was part of the Riese complex created in the Eulengebirge range (later Góry Sowie [Owl Mountains]) in conjunction with the construction of an underground headquarters in that region for Hitler and the Third Reich’s high command. Like all the other Riese camps, Falkenberg emerged from an agreement between Gross-Rosen and the Riese project’s main contractor, the Organisation Todt (OT).1 Falkenberg and the other Riese camps were subcamps of Gross-Rosen.

Falkenberg was set up in the hamlet of Eule (later Sowina), which was an administrative section of the village of Ludwikowice (later Ludwikowice Kłodzkie). Since the large village of Falkenberg (later Sokolec) was near Eule, the camp was named after that place. Various sources also call the camp Eule.

The Falkenberg camp probably came into being in late April or early May 1944. The first prisoners were Jews from Greece and Yugoslavia, brought from Auschwitz. They were recorded in the Gross-Rosen files on April 26. The next group to arrive were Polish Jews from the Krakau-Plaszow concentration camp, who had been admitted to Gross-Rosen on May 1.2 There were also some Hungarian Jews in the camp, who had been sent to Gross-Rosen in transports from Auschwitz on May 24, June 8, and in September 1944, as well as some Polish Jews from the Łódź ghetto.1 However, it is not known when the Łódź Jews were sent to Falkenberg or in which transport they arrived. A former prisoner from the transport from Krakau-Plaszow testified only that the Jews from the Łódź ghetto arrived after the transport of Hungarian Jews. The size of the group is also unknown.4

The first group of Greek and Yugoslavian Jews, probably numbering about 300 prisoners, was quartered in 10 small round barracks made of plywood called “Finnish huts.” The next group of 250 Jews from Krakau-Plaszow was put in 1 of the 3 already existing large barracks.1 According to the account of Michał Fallak, the “tent section” in which the Greek and Yugoslavian Jews lived was fenced off and constituted a separate camp. He would only encounter those prisoners during work.6 A total of up to 1,500 prisoners lived at Falkenberg.7

The camp had no kitchen during the first few weeks of its operation. Bread and soup would be delivered daily, and coffee would be brewed on site outdoors. In time, a kitchen and latrine were built.8 More barracks were also put up.9

A hospital was also set up in the camp; initially it had one room, later two. Dr. Bronisław Rubin was the camp doctor; he had arrived in the transport from Krakau-Plaszow. Besides him, seven more prisoners worked in the hospital: three doctors, two dentists, an orderly, and a prisoner who performed administrative work. The prisoners themselves strove to improve the hospital’s supply of medicine and equipment. Prisoners who worked at the railway station would get bandaging materials and vaseline; pharmacists would make salves out of sap and made salicin by boiling willow bark; prisoners working in the metal shops would make lancets, splints, and crutches; and wounds were sutured using needles and thread taken out of the sewing and shoemaking shops.

The camp death rate was high; the number of prisoners unable to work reached 200 in the autumn and winter of 1944, and the number of deaths was approaching 2 per day.10 The most seriously ill prisoners were taken away to the hospital at the Dönrauh camp. The surviving fragmentary records show that between October 6, 1944, and January 30, 1945, at least 68 prisoners wound up at the Dönrauh hospital, while 34 Falkenberg camp prisoners died there between March 19 and April 10, 1945.11

Prisoner selections were conducted at Falkenberg, as at the other Riese camps: the sick and weak who were unfit for work, yet still walking, were sent to neighboring camps.12

Hygienic conditions were simply terrible; the camp had no bathhouses. Fallak, who was at the Falkenberg labor camp from May 1944 through its evacuation, testified that they were only taken once to a bathhouse, located at another camp.13

Just as at the other camps, tremendous hunger prevailed at Falkenberg. However, in this instance it happened that prisoners working near buildings in the hamlet of Eule would sometimes receive a little bread and boiled potatoes from the German inhabitants.14

The terrible living conditions and very hard labor not only caused physical devastation but mental breakdown as well; prisoners who could not stand it any longer committed suicide. Dr. Rubin remembered that several prisoners hanged themselves, and one threw himself under a truck.15

The prisoners’ main occupation was excavating a tunnel in the northern and eastern slope of Schindelberg (later Gontowa) Mountain. It was particularly hard and dangerous labor, during which there were frequent accidents, many of which ended in deaths.16 Besides that, the prisoners built a road from

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Eule to the tunnel exits and the building complex in the forest on Schindelberg Mountain. On the mountain, they prepared the excavations for foundations, then laid the foundations for the surface buildings, dug ditches for sewers and telephone cables, and built the subgrade for the narrow-gauge railway and freight-handling facilities; they also worked at the railway siding in Ludwigsdorf, unloading building materials. The work was organized in two shifts of 12 hours each.17

The prisoner's labor was used primarily by the OT, the main contractor of the project under way in the mountains, as well as the companies with which it did business. The following companies were associated with this project: Hoffmannswerke/Bielitz; Wayss & Freytag; Hoch- und Tiefbau; Deutsche Hoch- und Tiefbaugesellschaft; Seidenspinner (Bauunternehmen); Urban (Bauunternehmen); Dybno (Bauunternehmen), and Fix (Barackenbau).18

Not much information has survived about the SS staff at Falkenberg. An SS company from Gross-Rosen served guard duty.

Falkenberg was disbanded sometime during the first 10 days of February 1945. After the sick people were transported back to the Dörnhau hospital in the final days of January, only those who could walk remained in the camp. That group left the camp in two columns. The first headed southward, proceeding through the town of Glatz (later Kłodzko) and reaching Czechoslovakia after several days of marching. The prisoners were then loaded into open railway cars and were taken toward Trautenau (later Trutnov). The second column was led northward to the Wolfsberg camp. Several days later, around February 16, they continued onward with the prisoner column. The several thousand prisoners were led toward the town of Friedland (later Mieroszów). The next day the prisoners reached the town of Schönberg (later Chełmsko Śląskie). There, the column was divided into two unequal sections. The smaller group was sent, probably immediately, to the station in Trautenau and finally taken by rail to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.19 The larger section, which remained at Schönberg and stayed in wooden sheds for several days, was also led to Trautenau. The prisoners were loaded into open railway cars and joined the transport that already included the group that had left Falkenberg via Glatz. That transport reached the Mauthausen subcamp in Ebensee.20

The larger Gross-Rosen subcamp at Gross-Rosen was created at the AMGR in Wałbrzych and the AZIH in Warsaw.

Two SS men from the Falkenberg camp were tried after the war. By a decree of the Wadowice District Court dated 8 April 1948, Otto Steinke was sentenced to four years in prison and seven years’ deprivation of the right to hold public or honorary office, as well as the confiscation of his property.22

The Schwidnica District Court sentenced Franz Rösel to death on May 22, 1947. The sentence was carried out on June 9, 1948.21

**NOTES**


2. AMGR, 3573/DP, Account of Bronisław Rubin; and 8751/68/DP, Account of Michał Fallak.

3. Files of Gross-Rosen concentration camp prisoners recreated at the Gross-Rosen Museum.

4. AZIH, Account No. 4113—Michał Fallak.

5. AMGR, 3573/DP, Recollections of Dr. Bronisław Rubin.

6. AZIH, Account No. 4113—Michał Fallak.


8. Ibid.; AMGR, 3573/DP, Recollections of Dr. B. Rubin.

9. AZIH, Account No. 4113—Michał Fallak.


11. AMGR, 2310/DP, Patient list as of May 9 1945; AMGR, 124/35/MF, Daily population log of Dörnhau hospital.


13. AZIH, Account No. 4113—Michał Fallak.


16. AMGR, 124/1077/MF, 8751/19/DP, Accounts of Mojżesz Teller.

17. AMGR, 8751/DP, Account of Aleksander Heller.


22. AMGR, A. Lasik, files of Gross-Rosen concentration camp staff members.
The Fürstenstein subcamp was one of the camps in the Riese complex created in the Eulengebirge range (later Góry Sowie [Owl Mountains] in the Central Sudets) in conjunction with the construction of the underground headquarters for Hitler and the Third Reich's high command in that region. Like all the other camps in the Riese system, the Fürstenstein camp derived from an agreement between the headquarters of Gross-Rosen concentration camp and the Riese project’s main contractor, the Organisation Todt (OT). Fürstenstein and other Reise camps were subcamps of Gross-Rosen.

The camp was situated on a hill about 1 kilometer (0.6 miles) southeast of Fürstenstein Castle (later Książ Castle within the Wałbrzych city limits) near the road between Fürstenstein Castle and the Waldenburg (later Wałbrzych)–Freiburg in Schlesier (later Świebodzice) road.

The camp was formed in May 1944. Jewish men were interned there, mostly from Hungary; there were also smaller groups of Greek and Slovakian Jews. Unfortunately, the records providing the exact number of prisoners have not survived. According to the account of a former prisoner, there were approximately 1,000 men at the Fürstenstein labor camp.\(^1\) In the initial transport from Gross-Rosen in May 1944, 400 people were brought there. For certain, there were Hungarian and Slovakian Jews in that transport.\(^2\) The next transports arrived over subsequent months. The prisoners whose names and camp numbers have been established were recorded in the Gross-Rosen files between May and August 1944.\(^3\)

The initial construction team is unknown. When the first transport arrived, small plywood barracks called “Finnish huts” had already been put up (at least partially), in which the prisoners were quartered. After the prisoners arrived, the campgrounds were fenced with barbed wire. The prisoners themselves continued the camp’s expansion.\(^4\)

Prisoners attempted to escape from this camp. We know of one attempt, in the latter half of January 1945, in which two Hungarian prisoners sought to escape: Aleksander Friedmann (Gross-Rosen camp no. 31579) and Mor Nauman (Gross-Rosen camp no. 39983). Unfortunately, the escape was unsuccessful, and the fugitives were caught. A few days later, on January 24, 1945, both prisoners were hanged in public at Fürstenstein.\(^5\)

Sanitary conditions in the camp were very bad. Even though the camp had a water supply and sewage system, very frequently there was no water. There was also a shortage of medical care and medicine.\(^6\) Sick prisoners were taken away to the infirmary for the entire Riese complex at the Dörnhau camp.\(^7\) Based on surviving records, we know that between October 28, 1944, and February 16, 1945, at least 98 sick Fürstenstein prisoners were sent back to the Dörnhau infirmary, while in another 100 cases, we are not able to determine whether the transport was from the camp to the hospital or from the hospital to the camp.\(^8\)

Since the records are incomplete, the exact number of deaths is unknown. However, from the surviving fragmentary records, it is known that in just the three weeks from March 19 to April 10, 1945 (after the camp reopened), as many as 56 prisoners who had been brought from Fürstenstein died and that the deaths of 15 persons were recorded in the final weeks of the camp’s operation between January 23 and February 8, 1945.\(^9\) These fragmentary figures indicate a high death rate at the camp, at least in the final period of its existence. The bodies of prisoners who died at the Fürstenstein subcamp were trucked away to the crematorium at Gross-Rosen. Only in the final weeks were the dead buried on-site in the forest, because of the main camp’s evacuation.\(^10\)

Very little information about the SS staff has survived. It is known that the Lagerführer was an SS man with the rank of Unterscharführer. Guard duty was served by a platoon from the guard company stationed at Tannhausen labor camp, a company commanded by SS man Heinrich Schicha.\(^11\)

The Fürstenstein Castle was supposed to be one of the buildings in the Riese project. Adapting the castle for new needs involved rebuilding the historic medieval structure. The work done at that time destroyed many valuable historic components of the castle forever.

The prisoners’ main workplace was the castle itself and its immediate environs. They dug tunnels under the castle. The length of the underground excavations that are known is about 950 meters (1,039 yards). A considerable portion of these tunnels were lined with concrete. Two shafts connecting the surface and the subterranean areas were built. Various construction work was being done in the castle itself; some rooms were rebuilt and repainted, wooden floors were replaced, new electrical and plumbing systems were installed, and a round staircase was built from the castle terraces to the first basement level.

Small groups of prisoners were put to work on the railway siding in Liebichau (later Lubiechów), handling construction materials and delivering them to the castle by narrow-gauge railway. They also worked building roads and water supply and sewer systems.

Prisoners with a higher education worked at the castle on road, tunnel, and building construction designs.\(^12\)

We know the following names of companies that the OT hired for the work being done at the castle and that joined with it in using the labor of Fürstenstein prisoners: Sänger und Laninger; Singer und Müller; Hegerfeld, Kemna und Co.; and Pischel.\(^13\)

The camp was evacuated in mid-February 1945. Sick prisoners were sent to the hospital at the Dörnhau camp. The last known transport from Fürstenstein reached Dörnhau on February 16.\(^14\) The prisoners who could walk were led out of the camp; they reached the town of Trautenau (later Trutnov) on
foot. There, they were loaded into railway cars without being given any rations. Many people suffocated and died in the horrible conditions on the train, without food or access to an adequate amount of air. Approximately 40 percent of the prisoners died; the bodies of the dead were thrown from the railway cars at stops. The transport eventually led to Flossenbürg.15

Everything indicates that new prisoners were brought to the camp, and work resumed in late February or early March 1945. The work continued until May 6. The next day, the OT abandoned the castle premises. That same day, the prisoners were taken away, probably to the Wüstewaltersdorf (later Walim) area, and were left there.16

Out of the SS staff members at Fürstenstein labor camp, only Stefan Horvat was tried after the war; he was captured by the Americans in May 1945, after which he was extradited to Poland on December 18, 1946. For belonging to the SS and being a guard at concentration camps, the Kraków District Court sentenced him on April 28, 1948, to three years in prison and five years’ deprivation of the right to hold public or honorary office, as well as the confiscation of his property. He served his sentence from April 28, 1948, to December 24, 1949, at the Montelupich Prison in Kraków. After serving his sentence, he was released and was extradited to Germany on April 18, 1950.17

SOURCES Published material on Fürstenstein is limited to Piotr Kruszynski, “Wykorzystanie pracy więźniów komplexu Gross-Rosen w Górach Sowich przez Organizację Todt oraz firmy z nią współpracujące,” in Wykorzystanie nieczynnej pracy więźniów KL Gross-Rosen przez III Rzeszę (Walbrzych, 1999); and Dorota Sula, Arbeitslager Riese: Filia KL Gross-Rosen (Walbrzych, 2003).

Archival material on the Fürstenstein subcamp can be found at the AK-IPN in Warsaw and the AMGR in Walbrzych.

NOTES
1. AMGR, 1238/DP-A, questionnaire of J. Weis.
2. Ibid.
3. Files of former Gross-Rosen concentration camp prisoners recreated at the Gross-Rosen Museum.
4. AMGR, 1238/DP-A, questionnaire of J. Weis.
6. AMGR, 1238/DP, questionnaire of J. Weis.
7. AMGR, 2330/DP, Concentration camp patient list as of May 9, 1945, compiled by Dr. Tadeusz Cytrion.
8. Ibid.; AMGR, 108/2/MF, Leichenbuch Dörnhau (22.03.–22.05.1945); AMGR, 124/35/MF, Daily population log of Dörnhau hospital (March 18 to April 10, 1945).
9. AMGR, 124/35/MF, Daily population log of Dörnhau hospital (March 18 to April 10, 1945); and 105/1382/MF, Section III, Totenliste des Konzentrationslagers Gross-Rosen, Arbeitslager Riese (Ungarn).
12. AMGR, 1238/DP-A, questionnaire of J. Weis.
15. AMGR, 1238/DP-A, questionnaire of J. Weis.
17. AK-IPN, SOKr-375, pp. 6, 96; SOKr-376, pp. 77–79.

RIESE/KALTWASSER

The Kaltwasser subcamp was part of the Riese complex created in the Eulengebirge range (later Góry Sowie [Owl Mountains] in the Central Sudets) in conjunction with the construction of an underground headquarters in that region for Hitler and the Third Reich’s high command. Like all the other camps in the Riese complex, Kaltwasser emerged from an agreement between Gross-Rosen and the Riese project’s main contractor, the Organisation Todt (OT).1 Kaltwasser and the other Riese camps were subcamps of Gross-Rosen.

Kaltwasser was set up on a gentle slope located south of the road between Wüstegiersdorf (later Głuszyca) and the village of Kaltwasser (later Zimna Woda in Głuszyca).2 It is not known who built the camp or when it was constructed. It consisted of no less than five living barracks, a hospital, kitchen, vegetable-peeling house, and warehouses. The initial prisoner transport arrived there from Auschwitz in late August 1944. The next one, also from Auschwitz, arrived around September 20. The prisoners were Polish Jews, mainly from Łódź.3 Henryk Susmanek, who was brought there in the first transport, remembered that upon their arrival and the issuing of camp numbers all the prisoners were inoculated against contagious diseases. The exact number of prisoners sent to the camp is not known. It can only be surmised (based on the number of living-quarter barracks) that it did not exceed 2,000.

The camp had a hospital. At first, one prisoner doctor worked there. Another one was sent later. When the number of patients began growing, the hospital started admitting only those patients who had a fever of at least 40 degrees Centigrade (104 degrees Fahrenheit).4 They most often wound up there due to colds, various types of inflammations, or open wounds on their legs.5

Prisoners in serious condition were transferred to the hospital at the Riese camp at Dörnhau; 33 Kaltwasser prisoners were sent to Dörnhau in the period from September to December 1944.6
No exact data on the prisoner death rate are available. Former prisoner recollections include accounts saying that every day crates with the bodies of the dead were removed from camp by truck. There is also information saying that the death rate grew week by week, from an initial 30 deaths per week to between 50 and 60, two weeks later. There were prisoner selections in the camp in September or October 1944. How many prisoners were selected is not known. However, it is known that in consequence over 90 percent of the hospital population was carted away in several trucks. Those prisoners were taken to Auschwitz along with prisoners selected at other Riese camps. Shortly after that event, there was another selection of "poor-looking" prisoners, who were sent to Riese/Wolfsberg. The prisoners made the journey between the two camps on foot. Shortly after that event, there was another selection of prisoners, who were sent to Riese/Wolfsberg. The prisoners made the journey between the two camps on foot. There is almost no information on the SS staff at Kaltwasser. What is known is that the camp leader (Lagerführer) was Georg Mittelstädt, born May 22, 1902, in Meissen in Saxony. He was at Gross-Rosen from 1944 to February 1945. In addition to Kaltwasser, he also served at the Lärche and Wüstewaltersdorf subcamps. He was transferred to the main camp before February 1945. An SS company from the Gross-Rosen concentration camp served guard duty at Kaltwasser. The name of one SS man is known: Georg Mittelstädt, born May 22, 1902, in Meissen in Saxony. He was at Gross-Rosen from 1944 to February 1945. In addition to Kaltwasser, he also served at the Lärche and Wüstewaltersdorf subcamps. He was transferred to the main camp before February 1945. The prisoners’ main workplace was the projects under construction on Ramenberg (later Sobon) Mountain: they leveled and surfaced the ground for a narrow-gauge railway track; they carried the rails; set down new tracks; felled trees to build new roads; dug ditches and put in sewers; cleared forests; unloaded railroad cars loaded with concrete, sand, and bricks; dumped stones out of trucks and shoveled them into ravines; and installed poles for electric wires. Some of the prisoners worked in two shifts regardless of the weather. All the labor was very hard and dangerous, and there were frequent accidents. There were also instances of suicide. Smaller groups of prisoners, mostly those who were no longer fit for hard labor, were sent to commandos on camp premises, such as the shoemaking commando, the vegetable and potato-peeling commando, or the grounds-keeping commando. The following companies used the labor of Kaltwasser prisoners: Fix, Sager und Wörner, Butzer und Holzmann; Argo-Waldenburg; Weiden und Petersil; and Lenz und Seiden. Kaltwasser was disbanded in December 1944, an event associated with a shift in the front. The healthy prisoners and the SS staff were transferred to the Lärche labor camp, while the sick prisoners were sent to the hospital at the Dörnhau camp and to the Tannhausen Zentralrevier (Central Infirmary). Only a small group of hospital patients and the peeling-facility personnel remained in the camp. Several SS men guarded them. They were finally sent to the Wolfsberg camp. The date when that group of prisoners left Kaltwasser is not known. What is known is that one of them died at the Wolfsberg camp on December 28, 1944, a few days after arriving there. Sources Information on the Kaltwasser subcamp can be found in the following essays: Bogdan Cybulski, “Analiza stanu więźniów w podobozach KL Gross-Rosen kompleksu Riese w latach 1944–1945,” SFiZH 7 (1981); Piotr Kruszynski, “Wykorzystanie pracy więźniów kompleksu Gross-Rosen w Górach Sowich przez Organizacje Todta oraz firmy z nią współpracujące,” in Wykorzystanie niewolniczej pracy więźniów KL Gross-Rosen przez III Rzeszę (Walbrzych, 1999); and Dorota Sula, Arbeitslager Riese: Filia KL Gross-Rosen (Walbrzych, 2003); as well as in the published recollections of a former prisoner of this camp, Abram Kajzer, Za drutami śmierci (Łódź, 1962). Archival material on the Kaltwasser subcamp can be found at the AK-IPN in Warsaw and in Wrocław and at the AMGR in Walbrzych. Piotr Kruszynski trans. Gerard Majka Notes 1. Report of examination of Johannes Hassebroek before the National [or Local/Regional] Court in Braunschweig on March 16, 1967, p. 231, BA-L, ZSt 413 AR-Z 567/67. 2. Abram Kajzer, Za drutami śmierci (Łódź, 1962), pp. 69–72. 3. Ibid.; AMGR, 92/N-A, Account of Henryk Susmanek; AMGR, 124/1479/MF, Account of Motko Kaufman. 4. Kajzer, Za drutami śmierci, pp. 92, 94. 5. AMGR, 124/1479/MF, Account of Motko Kaufman. 6. AMGR, 2330/DP, Patient list as of May 9, 1945. 7. Kajzer, Za drutami śmierci, pp. 108–109. 8. AMGR, 92/N-A, Account of Henryk Susmanek. 9. Kajzer, Za drutami śmierci, pp. 77–78. 10. AMGR, 5903/DP, Reports of examination of witnesses/Gross-Rosen concentration camp prisoners, pp. 54, 55; 6/181/ME, Report of examination of Jan Wojakowski; 5903/54/DP, extracts of examination of Josef Stancik. 11. AMGR, 47/51/MF, Report of examination of Georg Mittelstädt at Kraków Municipal Court. 12. Kajzer, Za drutami śmierci; AMGR, 92/N-A, Account of Henryk Susmanek; AMGR, 124/1479/MF, Account of Motko Kaufman. 13. Kajzer, Za drutami śmierci, pp. 87–88, 90; AMGR, 92/N-A, Account of Henryk Susmanek; AMGR, 296/DP-A, Henryk Susmanek; AMGR, 124/1479/MF, Account of Motko Kaufman, p. 24. 14. ITS, Verzeichnis der Hafttätten unter dem Reichsführer-SS (1933–1945): Konzentrationslager und deren Aussenkommandos
At 675 to 695 meters (738.2 to 760.1 yards) above sea level, it yards) north of the village of Kaltwasser (later Zimna Voda). of the Ramenberg (later Góra Sobóń), about 450 meters (492

The Lärche subcamp was part of the Riese complex created in the Eulengebirge range (later Góry Sowie [Owl Mountains] in conjunction with the construction of an underground headquarters for Hitler and the Third Reich's high command in that region. Like all the other camps in the Riese complex, Lärche developed out of an agreement between Gross-Rosen and the Riese project’s main contractor, the Organisation Todt (OT).1 Lärche and the other Riese camps were subcamps of Gross-Rosen.

The camp was situated on the southern slope of the Ramenberg (later Góra Sobóń), about 450 meters (492 yards) north of the village of Kaltwasser (later Zimna Voda). At 675 to 695 meters (738.2 to 760.1 yards) above sea level, it was the highest camp in the Riese complex. Lärche was most probably established in mid-December 1944, when most of the prisoners and staff of the disbanded Kaltwasser subcamp were moved there.2 The camp was located here so that prisoners working in the region did not have to travel so far to work. It is not known who built the camp initially. When the prisoners arrived from Kaltwasser, it was ready, and they were its first inmates. The camp's population cannot be exactly determined. In his account, former prisoner M. Kaufman stated that the group brought from Kaltwasser numbered 1,000 prisoners. Yet that same witness testified that there were 12 small barracks in the camp, including the sick room, workshop, warehouse, and space for the camp elder (Lagerältester). Each barrack could hold about 60 prisoners. Therefore, a maximum of 600 to 700 prisoners could have lived in the camp. Besides the Kaltwasser prisoners, a group of prisoners from the Wüstegiersdorf camp was also sent to Lärche.1

The prisoners were exclusively Jewish people from various European countries, mainly Poland, Hungary, and Greece.

The living conditions in this camp were very bad. The prisoners lived in low plywood barracks; light got into them through small windows in the peak. Streams of water poured into the barracks whenever the snow melted in the winter and spring.3 Up to four people a day died in a certain period due to the overall living and working conditions in the camp. According to a former prisoner’s account, because of that a committee came to the camp to “investigate” the living conditions. To decrease the prisoner death rate, “they ordered the lower bunks to be raised from the floor by 10 centimeters [3.9 inches].”4

Lice were also a veritable plague, causing the prisoners additional suffering, which a former prisoner depicted graphically in his recollections: “People’s entire bodies, which looked like skeletons, were wounded by scratching. They would get suppurating ulcers, in which the lice were very well sheltered.”5 Seriously ill prisoners were moved to the hospital at the Dörnhau subcamp. The first 4 prisoners arrived there on December 28, 1944. Another 30 were transported there in January 1945; the last known transport was admitted at Dörnhau on January 26; 15 Lärche prisoners died at the Dörnhau hospital between March 19 and April 10.6 Approximately 40 sick prisoners were also moved to the Wolsberg labor camp in mid-January. Several of the weakest prisoners died during the journey from one camp to the other, which they traveled on foot.8

SS-Scharführer Hartmann was the commander at Lärche; he had previously been commander at Kaltwasser and had been transferred with the prisoners. He was from Meissen in Saxony. He was at Gross-Rosen from 1944 to February 1945. Besides Kaltwasser and Lärche, he also served at Riese/Wüstewaldsatzdorf.9

An SS company from Gross-Rosen served guard duty at Lärche. The only known SS man was Georg Mittelstädt, born May 22, 1902, in Waldheide. Besides Lärche, he also served guard duty at several other Gross-Rosen subcamps.10

The main place where Lärche prisoners worked was on the construction of buildings in the region of Ramenberg Mountain: they built roads, narrow-gauge railway lines, and water supply systems; they excavated for foundations and also excavated tunnels inside the Ramenberg. Prisoners were also put to work handling freight, as well as on jobs at the camp itself, such as at the shoemaking shop.11

The following companies put Lärche prisoners to work: Butzer und Holzmann, Argo-Waldenburg, and Lingen.12

There is a surviving account by a former prisoner saying that there was an organized mutual aid movement at Lärche, most probably in the Łódź ghetto prisoner community; the aid consisted of the prisoners working in the shoemaking shop providing their most needy fellows with extra portions of soup (the prisoners working in the shoemaking shop got extra portions of soup). They provided at least 6 to 10 portions a day.13

The Lärche camp was disbanded on February 8, 1945. The prisoners went to Mährbachtal, where they stayed until mid-March, after which they and the prisoners from that camp joined a large collective evacuation column of approximately 4,000 Riese prisoners.14 The prisoners were led southwest; the route of that death march led through such places as the town of Friedland (later Mierszów) and Liebau (later Lubawa). In four days they reached the city of Parschnitz (later Poříčí); there they were loaded onto freight cars, reaching the Flossenbürg concentration camp after about a week’s journey.15 The prisoner transport that had been assembled at the Riese complex in mid-February was recorded in the Flossenbürg concentration camp files on February 25, 1945.16

**Sources** Information on the Lärche subcamp can be found in the following essays: Bogdan Cybulski, “Analiza stanu więźniów w podobozach KL Gross-Rosen kompleksu Riese w
The Märzbachtal subcamp was one of the camps in the Riese complex created in the Eulengebirge range (later Góry Sowie [Owl Mountains] in the Central Sudetes) in conjunction with the construction of an underground headquarters for Hitler and the Third Reich's high command in that region. Like all the other camps in the Riese complex, Märzbachtal developed from an agreement between the headquarters of Gross-Rosen and the Riese project's main contractor, the Organisation Todt (OT). Märzbachtal and the other Riese camps were subcamps of Gross-Rosen.

Märzbachtal was located near the city of Wüstegiersdorf (later Głuzyca). It was located on a mountainside over the Grosser-März-Bach valley (later Marcowy Potok Duży). The camp was most probably put into operation in late May–early June 1944.

The construction of the first buildings at Märzbachtal began in May 1944. The work was done by a commando of prisoners from the nearby Riese/Wüstegiersdorf subcamp. At that time, approximately 40 to 50 small living barracks were erected, measuring about 3 × 4 meters (3.3 × 4.4 yards). Then Märzbachtal prisoners put up additional buildings, such as the kitchen, headquarters, a bathhouse, lavatories, workshops, workshops, hospital barrack, and more living-quarters barracks, large and small, as well as a fence around the entire camp. That work was conducted almost until the end of the camp's existence.

The first group of prisoners arrived at the camp on June 9, 1944. They were Romanian and Hungarian Jews from Transylvania, approximately 600 to 700 of them. These prisoners arrived at the Oberwüstegiersdorf (Głuszyc Gorna) railway station in a transport of approximately 4,000 men from Auschwitz, all of them destined for various Riese camps. They made the several-kilometer trip from the railroad station to Märzbachtal on foot. That was probably the core group of prisoners and probably the only one sent to Märzbachtal from another concentration camp. Subsequent small groups of prisoners, including Polish and Slovakian Jews, started arriving from other Riese camps only in the late summer and autumn of 1944. There were many juveniles—teenage boys—among the prisoners (especially in the Transylvanian group). According to the account of former prisoner Erwin Rona, the camp's highest population was approximately 800.

The living conditions in the camp were very hard. When the initial transport arrived, the camp was just being built and outfitted. The basic structures such as the kitchen, lavatories, and bathhouse had not been built yet. The living barracks lacked bunks and bedding; the prisoners had to sleep on the bare floor. They did not receive any blankets or mess kits. The sanitary conditions were very primitive: prisoners washed up outside at a water pipe in which holes had been drilled, and their latrine was an outhouse made of a few poles. The kitchen was erected only in July; until then, food was trucked in from outside the camp in pails.

NOTES

6. Ibid.
10. AMGR, 47/51/MF, Report of examination of Georg Mittelstädt at Kraków Municipal Court.
14. Ibid., p. 32.
An SS company from Gross-Rosen concentration camp served guard duty at Märzbachtal.

Like all the other camps of the Riese complex, this camp was established in order to provide the manpower for the OT's secret construction project at Eulengebirge. The Märzbachtal prisoners' main workplaces were the structures being built in the März Bach valley and on the nearby mountainsides. The prisoners worked clearing the forest and excavating. They built roads and bridges there; they dug ditches for water lines and excavations for the foundations of aboveground buildings; they were put to work installing electric lines. They were probably also put to work excavating a tunnel underneath Ramenberg Mountain (later Sokoň Mountain). Some prisoners worked in internal commandos expanding and organizing the Märzbachtal camp. According to the International Tracing Service (ITS), the prisoners worked for the following companies: Otto Trebitz, Argo-Waldenburg, Mühlhausen, and Weiden und Petersil.

A hospital was set up in the camp: 3 prisoner doctors were put to work there in succession: Dr. Fuchs, Dr. Mandel, and Dr. Elias. Later, an additional doctor was put to work there, Dr. Berger from Transylvania. According to Rona, there were 20 to 30 doctors among the Märzbachtal prisoners. Only the less seriously ill were kept at the hospital there. More seriously ill prisoners were carted off to the hospital in Dörnhau. Records show at least 12 transports between Märzbachtal and Dörnhau, selections were conducted at Märzbachtal, in which Obersturmführer Heinrich Rindfleisch, the chief SS doctor at Riese, performed the selections personally. There were a few of them, no less than three. In the second largest one (late July and mid-August 1944), 45 to 65 prisoners were selected. In the third and largest one (late October–early November 1944), 600 juvenile prisoners were selected; they had been brought there a few days earlier from all the other Riese camps. During that selection, Dr. Rindfleisch was assisted by SS men who were not on the Märzbachtal staff, as well as by Riese's camp leader (Lagerführer), SS-Hauptsturmführer Albert Lüdkemeyer. The prisoners who were selected were taken away to Auschwitz and probably gassed.

No precise information is available on the death rate at Märzbachtal. From the entries in the surviving “Daily population log of Dörnhau hospital,” it is known that over a period of not quite a month (between March 19 and April 10, 1945) 23 prisoners from Märzbachtal died at that hospital.

We know of one escape attempt. Ludwig Fischer, a Hungarian Jew with prisoner number 33815, attempted to escape in the late summer of 1944. Unfortunately, his attempt to regain his freedom failed; Fischer was caught and executed. The execution by hanging was conducted on the Märzbachtal assembly grounds.

The camp’s evacuation began in mid-February 1945. A few days earlier, on February 8, the prisoners from the disbanded Lärche camp were brought to Märzbachtal. The prisoners of both camps joined a huge collective evacuation column of Riese prisoners, numbering approximately 4,000 men. The column was sent to the southwest. The prisoners walked approximately 15 kilometers (9.3 miles) the first day. They stayed the night in the town of Friedland (later Mieroszów). Some of the prisoners were put in the Gross-Rosen subcamp there; the others were put in an inactive factory. They probably spent the next night at the camp at Liebau (later Lubawka). After four days of murderous marching on snow-covered roads, they reached Parschnitz (later Poříčí). Here the prisoners were loaded onto freight cars. After almost a week of this ghastly journey, the transport reached the Flossenbürg concentration camp. On February 25, 1945, those who had the strength and luck to survive were recorded in that camp’s files. However, the Flossenbürg concentration camp was not the destination for all the Riese prisoners. According to Kaufman's account, about two weeks later, some of the prisoners from that transport were transported to the Buchenwald concentration camp.

The two SS men from the Märzbachtal camp guard company whose names are known were tried after the war. Franz Rösel was sentenced to death by the Świdnica District Court on May 22, 1947. He was executed on June 9, 1948. By decree of the Wadowice District Court, dated April 16, 1948, Richard Michael Rank was sentenced to four years in prison and five years deprivation of the right to hold public or honorary office, as well as the confiscation of his property.


Archival material on the Märzbachtal subcamp can be found at the BA-L; the AK-IPN in Warsaw; and the AMGR in Wałbrzych.

NOTES
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. AMGR, 2330/DP, Cytron’s patient list.
RIESE/SÄUFERWASSER CAMP

The Riese/Säuerwasser camp was set up on a hill near the Säuferwasser (Klobia) creek. It had been in existence since at least August 23, 1944, because that was the day that a transport of prisoners arrived at Dörnhau from Säuferwasser. However, it is probable that it was formed as early as May or June 1944. That is indicated by camp numbers that were assigned on such dates as May 24, 1944, or June 8, 1944, to prisoners who had arrived from Auschwitz and were sent to Säuferwasser. The prisoners were Jews from Poland, Hungary, Greece, and Slovakia. The names of 1,245 prisoners of this camp have been identified. There were 417 prisoners of this camp have been identified. There were 140 juvenile prisoners among them. No information about the staff of this camp is available.

The prisoners worked under the instructions of the Holzmann company. They did the excavation for building foundations. They built what was called the “Kasyno” (Casino) (a single-level reinforced-concrete building, over 50 meters long and 14 meters wide [164 by 46 feet]) and the “Siłownia” [Powerhouse] (a concrete barracks 29.8 by 30.3 meters [97.8 by 99.4 feet], housing internal facilities accessible via hatchways with steel clamps), a water reservoir, and residential buildings near the summit of Säufer Höhen (Osówka) Mountain. They built drainage ditches, a water supply system from Grosse Eule Berg (Wielka Sowa, Great Owl) to Säufer Höhen, roads, and a narrow-gauge railway system. They dug tunnels in Säufer Höhen Mountain and did concrete work.

The death rate at this subcamp must have been great, as 31 sick Säuferwasser prisoners died at the infirmary at Dörnhau just in the period from March 19 to April 10, 1945. The camp was liberated in May 1945.

SOURCES

For sources for this camp, see “Riese Complex.”

NOTE

RIESE/TANNHAUSEN

The Riese/Tannhausen (Jedlinka) camp was formed in late April or early May 1944 in the buildings of a linen mill owned by Welsky, Hartmann and Wiesen AG. The prisoners were Hungarian, Greek, Polish, and Western European Jews. The names of 273 prisoners have been identified. No information is available about the camp's staff. The prisoners were put to work by the Organisation Todt (OT). They were liberated in May 1945.

SOURCES For sources for this camp, see “Riese Complex.”

RIESE/WOLFSBERG

The Wolfsberg labor camp was one of the camps in the Riese labor camp complex created in the Eulengebirge range (present-day Góry Sowie [Owl Mountains] in the Central Sudets), in conjunction with the construction of the underground headquarters for Hitler and the Third Reich's chief command in that region. Like all the other camps in the Riese labor camp, the Wolfsberg labor camp was formed in consequence of an agreement between the headquarters of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp and the Riese project's main contractor, the Organisation Todt (OT).1 The labor camp and the other camps comprising the Riese labor camp were subcamps of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp.

The Wolfsberg labor camp was established on the northeastern slope of Wolfsberg (Włodarz) Mountain, above the road connecting Wüstewaltersdorf (present-day Walim) to Jauernig (present-day Jugowice Górne). The Wolfsberg camp came into being in May 1944. Like all of the other Riese complex camps, it was established in order to provide the manpower for the secret headquarters construction project.

Wolfsberg was the largest of the Riese camps. Based on the number of names that have been successfully established, at least 3,110 prisoners passed through the camp. Among them were over 500 juvenile prisoners who were under 18 years of age in 1944.2 There are 3,012 names on a surviving list of prisoners dated November 22, 1944.3 All the prisoners were Jewish; they were mainly from Poland and Hungary but also from Greece, the Netherlands, and Germany.4

The timeline of the transports sent to this camp is not known. Based on knowledge of the prisoners' camp numbers, all that can be deduced is that Wolfsberg held mostly prisoners brought to the Gross-Rosen concentration camp from the Auschwitz concentration camp between late April and September of 1944.5 There were also transports to Wolfsberg from other Gross-Rosen subcamps. After November 22, 1944, several hundred Jewish prisoners arrived from the Fünfteichen labor camp,6 and in late December, a group of sick inmates from the Kaltwasser labor camp were transported here.7

There were three types of living facilities in the camp:

- typical camp barracks
- Finnish “huts” (literally tarp-covered primitive round plywood barracks, small and low) accommodating about 20 people
- ordinary dugouts accommodating up to 20 people

The prisoners slept side by side on the ground in the huts and dugouts, with wood shavings for bedding.8 The camp had an infirmary, to which less seriously ill prisoners were sent. A high death rate prevailed in camp due to the extremely primitive living conditions, as well as the poor hygienic conditions, the spreading of contagious diseases, and lack of medical assistance, coupled with tremendous hunger, hard labor beyond the strength of the emaciated prisoners, and the ubiquitous terror. From the surviving fragmentary German records, it is known that in the final three months of the camp's operation alone, between November 22, 1944, and February 20, 1945, at least 114 prisoners died.9 That figure is incomplete because—just as at the other Riese complex camps—the more seriously ill prisoners were sent to the central hospital at Tannhausen or the hospital at Dörnhau, where they died in masses. R. Olzyna determined that 613 Wolfsberg prisoners died in that period, and the death of another 65 patients was recorded at the Dörnhau hospital after the camp's evacuation, between March 19 and April 10, 1945.10

The bodies of the dead were carted away to the crematorium at the Gross-Rosen concentration camp until approximately mid-December 1944. In the final two months of the camp's operation, however, the dead were most probably buried in the woods near the camp.11 The prisoners' situation was tragic, so there were many suicidal acts at Wolfsberg. Despite such a desperate situation, not all the prisoners lost heart and looked for liberation in death. Many found consolation and the strength to survive in prayer, studying the Torah, and piously observing Jewish holy days.12

It is unclear who the Lagerführer (camp leader) of Wolfsberg was. The references cite the names of three SS men who supposedly performed that job; they are Rudolf Kugelmeier,13 Fabian Ritt,14 and SS-Oberscharführer Kluss.15 It is also possible that all three performed that job at various periods. An SS company from the Gross-Rosen concentration camp served guard duty.

The Wolfsberg prisoners were put to work on construction projects in the region of Wolfsberg and Mittelberg (present-day Dzial Jarownicki) Mountain. They excavated tunnels inside the mountain; built the foundations of aboveground structures; did water-line and sewer work; reinforced the banks of mountain streams; and built bridges, reservoirs, narrow-gauge railway subgrades, and a road from Jauernig going to Säufer-Höhen (present-day Osówka) Mountain.16 The chief project contractor, OT, hired many different companies to do all that work. According to Abram Kajzer, a former prisoner at a number of Riese camps, there were as many as 38 of those companies.17 The following ones are known: Vereinigte Deutsche Metallwerke (VDM), Tebe und Bucer,
The work in the tunnel consisted of drilling blasting holes using pneumatic drills. After the blasts, prisoners loaded the crushed rock material onto narrow-gauge railway cars. It was very heavy labor, which was dangerous and resulted in many accidents. The prisoners did it manually to a large extent and were issued no protective clothing. On many occasions the pace of work was so fast that they did not even wait for the resulting gases and hovering dust to clear from the excavations after the explosive blasts.

Evacuation preparations were begun in the first 10 days of February 1945. The prisoners were ordered to build sleds, which were going to be the means of transport, but then they were ordered to convert them into carts because of an unexpected thaw;

others sewed large sacks, which were later packed with provisions for the SS men. A selection was conducted among the prisoners, and anyone who was fit for the journey was picked. The Falkenberg labor camp prisoners fit for evacuation were also led to Wolfsberg at that time. The sick people were left in the camp. On February 20, after the evacuation column had left, 136 of them were taken back to Wolfsberg labor camp.

Evacuation commenced on February 16, 1945. A column of several thousand prisoners left Wolfsberg. Smaller groups of prisoners from the Wüstegiersdorf and Schotterwerk labor camps joined them along the way.

The column thus formed was escorted toward the town of Friedland (present-day Miroszów); that same day, 71 prisoners unfit to travel onward were left at the Friedland subcamp. The others were herded into two large barns standing out in the open to stay the night. Due to being pressed upon by such a great number of people, the huge door of one of the barns collapsed, crushing 56 prisoners; the casualties of the accident were buried in a mass grave.

The next day the column reached the town of Schönberg (present-day Chelmksko Śląskie). There, the column was probably divided into two sections. On day three of the march, the smaller group of prisoners was sent to the railway station in Trautenau (present-day Trutnov). They were loaded onto railway cars and finally transported to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

The other group, considerably larger, was sent to the Mauthausen concentration camp subcamp at Ebensee where, 2,048 prisoners were entered in the Ebensee records on March 3, 1945, and assigned numbers from 135401 through 137448.

Among the Wolfsberg staff’s SS contingent whose names are known, only Johann Klar was tried. He was extradited from Germany’s American occupation zone to Poland on December 18, 1946, and was sentenced to death by the Kraków District Court on December 22, 1948. On July 4, 1949, the Kraków Province Court commuted the sentence to life in prison. He was released on March 7, 1959, as part of an amnesty.


Piotr Kruzyński
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES


2. AMGR, Files of former Gross-Rosen concentration camp prisoners, Wolfsberg labor camp prisoners.

3. AMGR, sygn. [Catalog No.] 6920/DP, Häftlingsliste, Kommando Wolfsberg vom 22.11.1944.


5. Based on the files of former Gross-Rosen concentration camp prisoners recreated at the AMGR.


7. AMGR, Catalog No. 92/N-A, Account of Henryk Susmanek.


9. AMGR, Catalog No. 6920/DP, Häftlingsliste, Kommando Wolfsberg vom 22.11.1944.


RIESE/WÜSTEGIERSDORF

[AKA LAGER V]

The Wüstegiersdorf subcamp, also called Lager V, was set up in the buildings of the Stöhr company’s textile mill, located in the middle of Wüstegiersdorf (now Głuszyca). The camp was formed in May 1944. There were between 700 and 1,000 prisoners in the camp; they were primarily Polish and Hungarian Jews.

SS-Scharführer Schwarz held the post of Lagerführer (camp leader). The staff was probably made up of a dozen or so people but changed from time to time.

The prisoners were used for work connected with construction projects in the Ramenberg (Sobóć) and Säuer Höhen (Ośówka) Mountain region. As one prisoner put it, “The work at the quarry was more than people could bear. After a few days of that murderous work, most people collapsed.” Prisoners were also assigned to various jobs in the town of Wüstegiersdorf. There were two commandos of 100 prisoners each whose job was to build drainage systems. And 30 prisoners were sent to work at the train station, where they unloaded freight cars of provisions, sand, stone, and wood. Prisoners cleared forests, worked in the metal, carpentry, sewing, and shoemaking shops, and delivered provisions to the camps.

The following companies used their labor: Messinger, Tiefbau, Sager & Wörnner, Ways & Freytag, Hoch und Tiefbau, Fix (built barracks), Dübner (tunnel construction), Websky (machine dismantling), Holzmann, Schallhorn, Lenz, Krup, and National Socialist Motor Corps (Nationalsozialistisches Kraftfahrkorps, NSKK).

The death rate at the camp was substantial, although it seems to be lower than at the other Riese complex camps. A few transfers from other subcamps are known: 11 prisoners from the infirmary at Tannhausen probably arrived in September 1944, among them Abram Kajzer. In his diary, under the date of Tuesday [n.d.] 1944, he wrote:

We who came here from the hospital don’t go to work outside the camp, but work in camp premises under the supervision of a kapo. We sweep the assembly ground, tidy up the trash dump, and chop wood. Some of us are lucky enough to have been assigned to cleaning the barrack. They have it good, as they avoid the rain, snow and cold which chills you to the bone, as well as the keen vision of the Lagerführer, who cannot bear to see anyone standing idly, even though there often is not any work in the courtyard. . . . When the Lagerführer appears, we are seized by crazy fear. . . . Our compulsory idleness drives the Lagerführer into such a rage that he roars, beating and kicking, until his victim loses consciousness. . . .

Thursday, [n.d.] 1944.

Today was the first day that I and four others who had also returned from the hospital worked in a commando. We removed feces from the latrine under the supervision of an SS-man. Taking the opportunity, we “appropriated” some potatoes from a nearby shed, exchanging them this evening for some soup and bread, and baking some of them. We have been ordered to go to work tomorrow, too. 2

One of the prisoners attempted to escape, but unfortunately he was caught and hanged in the presence of the prisoners, including his father. The name of the victim has not been identified. The camp was probably evacuated to the Flossenburg concentration camp on February 24, 1945. In the first stage of the evacuation, the prisoners walked through the mountains to Trautenau, where they were loaded onto freight cars. There were many mortalities along the way. Those who were unable to march were shot.

**SOURCES** For sources for this camp, see “Riese Complex.”

Dorota Sula

trans. Gerard Majka
NOTES

1. AMGR, sygn. No. 124/1389 MF, account of Zew Weinhreb.

RIESE/WÜSTEWALTERSDORF
[AKA STENZELBERG]

Wüstewaltersdorf was one of the camps in the Riese complex, which formed part of the vast system of Gross-Rosen sub-camps. Since almost no official German documents concerning this site exist, the only major sources are a few survivor testimonies and information provided by Polish informants as well as former German inhabitants of the village of Wüstewaltersdorf (now Walim). Like the other Riese camps, Wüstewaltersdorf was situated in the Eulengebirge (Góry Sowie), a mountain range near the present-day Czech-Polish border, not far from the city of Walbrzych (Waldenburg). According to former German residents of Wüstewaltersdorf, this camp was located on the southern upper slope of a mountain called Stenzel-Berg (Chłopska Góra). It was separated from Wolfsberg, one of the larger Riese camps, by a narrow valley through which the road from Friedrichsberg (now Kolonia Górna, a section of Walim) to Hausdorf (Jugowice) runs.

Available sources contain some clues about the beginnings of the Wüstewaltersdorf camp. In a memorandum to the Regierungsrat (regional government chairman) in Breslau (Wrocław) dated May 27, 1944, Amtsarzt Dr. Kaiser, who was well acquainted with most of the camps existing in the area at this time, mentions three for which he cannot supply any further information—that looked like round tents. Each of them accommodated 10 inmates. According to a Polish informant, his firm, Bender (Munich), set up approximately 50 of these “tents” as well as two or three barracks for the guards and the kitchen in the spring of 1944. No statistics exist concerning transports to Wüstewaltersdorf, the fluctuating number of prisoners, or the total number of deaths. Also, it is not known whether non-Jewish inmates were at this camp. It was fenced in with barbed wire, and there were guard towers as well.

Forced labor at this camp included earthmoving, as well as the construction of railroads, buildings, tunnels, and roads. The latter involved splitting rocks with sledgehammers, a particularly dangerous assignment. Prisoners were almost certainly involved in the construction of the road leading from Wüstewaltersdorf past the Stenzel-Berg and the camp to the road linking Friedrichsberg and Hausdorf. Günter Proll (born 1923), a former inhabitant of Wüstewaltersdorf, reports that prisoners were escorted from the camp on the Stenzel-Berg through the center of the village to the mountain near the Kriesten sawmill in his neighborhood, Dorfbach (Rzeczka). At this location, three approximately parallel tunnels, each with a separate entrance, were under construction. A memorial site established by Polish authorities serves as a reminder of the life-threatening labor that prisoners were forced to perform there. Horst Wittrig (born 1931), who spent his childhood in a part of the village called Zeiditzheide (Siedlikiów), frequently witnessed a group of approximately 50 exhausted prisoners passing by who were harassed and beaten by Kapos. From the summer of 1944 to approximately February 1945, they took part in constructing a large nearby water storage facility, which was still in use at the turn of the century, as well as in digging trenches for pipes and utility cables leading into and away from this site. In the summer of 1944, prisoners were frequently seen digging utility trenches alongside the road...
to Hausdorf, just outside of Wüstewaltersdorf. The various work details were supervised by members of the Organisation Todt (OT), as well as employees of firms active in and around the village, among them Gebrüder Butzer & Holzmann and Hutto Hydrierwerke AG. Villagers also repeatedly witnessed emaciated and poorly dressed prisoners removing snow from roads in Wüstewaltersdorf during the winter of 1944–1945. What was particularly shocking to the onlookers was that they wore wooden clogs, with their feet wrapped in rags.

As winter approached, many prisoners, especially those from Greece, died from hunger, exposure, and disease. At some risk to themselves, a number of villagers gave small amounts of food to inmates. The first Lagerführer, reportedly an SS-Oberscharführer, who appeared to be very knowledgeable about repairing shoes, announced that only dead or working inmates shall be in the camp; accordingly, he was in the habit of beating sick inmates. This Lagerführer was followed by two others, about whom no information is available. U.S. Army records reveal the names of three guards at the Wüstewaltersdorf camp, all of whom were transferred to the Waffen-SS in 1944 prior to their concentration camp assignments. Gustav Friedrich Feller (b. 1879) served there in January and February 1945, Walther Rehberg (b. 1908) from September 1944 to February 1945, and Wilhelm Sonnenberg (b. 1903) from August 25, 1944, to March 1945. On one occasion, in the summer or fall of 1944, while playing on a slope above the Zedlitzheide soccer field, Horst Wittig noticed a considerable number of guards surrounding hundreds of prisoners below him. Shots rang out in the distance, and afterward he heard grown-ups talk about a failed escape attempt by several Jews.

Information regarding transports out of Wüstewaltersdorf is fragmentary. Sometime in the summer or fall of 1944, another group of inmates must have been transferred to the Wolfssberg camp because the names of some of the prisoners who arrived in Wüstewaltersdorf in late May 1944 appear on the Wolfssberg list of November 22, 1944. According to a Polish worker who had lived in Wüstewaltersdorf since 1943, the camp was evacuated around the middle of February 1945. Joseph Gelber (b. 1925) and Mayer Lowy (b. 1925), both from Hungary, report that subsequently they were in Bergen-Belsen, Stutthof/Pölitz, and Ravensbrück/Barth. They are likely to have been in a transport of approximately 500 prisoners from Wüstegiersdorf that arrived in Bergen-Belsen toward the end of February 1945. Together with 1,500 to 2,000 other prisoners, they were taken from there to Pölitz near Stettin around the middle of March. These three and possibly other former Wüstewaltersdorf inmates are likely to have been among the 400 male prisoners who left Pölitz for Barth on April 18, 1945.

**NOTES**

1. This location has been confirmed by Piotr Kruszynski (Nürnberg), a native of Poland, as a result of his wide-ranging explorations of the terrain (interview by the author, November 4, 2005). Among the former Wüstewaltersdorf residents who indicate that the camp was located on the Stenzel-Berg are the following: Gertrud Winkler née Richter, born 1913 (interview August 7, 2005); Günter Proll, born 1923, and Kurt Scholz (Wüw He, no. 115 [1994]). The camp under discussion here is not to be confused with the so-called Lager I, which was located in Wüstewaltersdorf itself.

2. VHF, No. 49887 and Pre-Interview Questionnaire; USHMMA, Oral History Interview RG-50.030*0313.

3. VHF, No. 29338.

4. Ibid. Dr. Andrei Gergely likewise reports that the camp was empty when his transport arrived (BA-L, B 162/5606, p. 335).

5. VHF, No. 29338.

6. BA-L, B 162/5606, p. 335 (statement by Dr. A. Gergely).

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. VHF, No. 29338 (testimonial by Th. Figueras).


11. Thomas and Paul Nadelstecher (Dorota Sula, AMGR, email September 1, 2005); Andrei Gergely (Shaül Ferrero, YV, email October 31, 2005).


**RIEZE/ZENTRALREVIER OR ZENTRALKRANKENREVIER IN TANNAUSEN**

[AKA BLUMENAU]

The alternate name of the hospital comes from the name of the hamlet of Blumenau (present-day Ježelinka Górna) where it was located. The Central Camp Hospital (Zentralkrankenrevier) was established in the latter half of 1944 for sick Riese complex prisoners. It was composed of four one-level brick buildings surrounded by barbed wire.

There were up to 1,000 sick prisoners at a time there near the end of the war. Prisoner A. Kajzer wrote the following about his stay at the “hospital”:

**SOURCES**

A number of videotaped interviews preserved by the VHF (nos. 690, 27641, 29338, 40995, 49887) and the testimony by a survivor before a German court (BA-L, B 162/5606, p. 335) are important sources for this entry, as are interviews with, and statements by, former German inhabitants of the town of Wüstewaltersdorf. Piotr Kruszynski, one of the foremost experts on the Riese complex of camps, supplied pertinent information from his files. For an overview of Riese and some information on camps in and just outside of Wüstewaltersdorf, see Dariusz Garba, Riese: Das Rätsel um Hitler’s Hauptquartier (Zella-Mehlis: Heinrich-Jung-Verlagsgesellschaft, 2000). The search for Nazi documents regarding Wüstewaltersdorf did not yield new results. Additional information has been provided by the USHMM, the AMGR, and the AG-BB and AG-S.
Yesterday we were in the bath. We received fresh underwear and fresh [ striped prisoners’] uniforms. We were deoused. It is extremely clean here and lice are not biting us anymore. If not for the fact that there are guards in the corridor and outside the barbed wires, I would not feel as if I were a prisoner at all. In the morning at roll-call, everyone stays at their bunks, just raising their heads. The Unter- scharführer takes the roll-call. We are allowed to lay in our bunks the whole day and rest as much as we want. What a pleasure!

Tannhausen, Thursday, [n.d.] 1944.

This morning a doctor visited us—a Dutch Jew, an extremely pleasant and good man. . . . He asked each of us detailed questions about our illnesses, and recommended laying in bed as treatment.

“That’s all I can treat you with,” he said. “At least for the time being, until medicine arrives.” . . .

Saturday, [n.d.] 1944. . . . The doctor said that anyone who recovers has to return to the camp he came from. That would be awful. I’d rather die here. True, the food here is worse than in camp, but on the other hand, it’s blissful to lay all day in warmth, under a blanket, and think of the past and future.¹

Upon liberation, the sick prisoners stayed in the infirmary barracks that were now called the Blumenau hospital. Its purpose was to care for those former prisoners whose general weakness precluded them from returning home safely. The hospital was closed in late June 1945.

**Sources** For sources for this camp, see “Riese Complex.” Dorota Sula trans. Gerard Majka

**Note**


**Sackisch**

The subcamp in Sackisch (present-day Zakrze), was formed because several plants and companies manufacturing for wartime production, primarily Vereinigte Deutsche Metallwerke (VDM), as well as the Schmann, Goldschmidt, and Telefunken companies, had been moved to the Bad Kudowa (now Kudowa Zdrój) region in late 1943 and early 1944.

Thousands of laborers had to be brought in to provide the manpower needed to continue operations. A large camp with about 20 barracks was built for them. The camp was situated on swampy land along the road between Sackisch and Bad Kudowa. The buildings extended for about 2 kilometers (1.2 miles). Because of the marshy substrate, the barracks were built on posts driven into the ground. Polish forced laborers and Russian and Italian prisoners of war (POWs) were put into the barracks. The POW barracks were fenced with barbed wire, and Wehrmacht soldiers stood guard.

In the summer of 1944, five accommodations barracks were appropriated from the big camp, a separate kitchen and warehouse were set up, and a guardhouse was added; it was all surrounded by a barbed-wire fence, like the POW section. That is how the separate camp under Gross-Rosen concentration camp was formed.²

Sackisch most probably began operating in late August or early September 1944. Jewish women from Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia were sent to Sackisch. The camp’s population at any given time is hard to determine. At least four known transports were sent to the camp. They all came from the Auschwitz concentration camp. The transports brought a total of at least 950 women.

The first transport probably reached Sackisch in late August 1944. It numbered at least 300 women; they were Polish Jews from the Łódź ghetto. Tauba Szmaragd, who received number 33904, arrived in that transport.²

Another 250 women from Hungary and Poland were brought to the camp in the second known transport. On October 12, the prisoners were issued camp numbers ranging from 66501 through 66750.

Another transport of 250 Czech and Hungarian Jews reached Sackisch also around mid-October 1944. The women who arrived at that time received numbers 67051 through 67300.³

The last transport was admitted on November 28, 1944. The 150 Czech Jewish women were issued numbers 86001 through 86150.

There is little information available about the transports leaving Sackisch. What is known is that on December 10, 1944, 20 prisoners were sent on to two other Gross-Rosen subcamps (10 to each camp): Bernsdorf (present-day Bernartice) and Parschnitz (present-day Poříčí).⁴

Another source provides the additional information that “some of the prisoners were moved to the Langenbielauf camp” in 1944.⁵

According to the affidavit of former prisoners Fejni Orenstein and Chai Mayer, 16 women died at Sackisch; they were buried near the local church.⁶ The names of 4 of the deceased are known: Helena Grunberg, Bianka Sara Kasum, Ida Sara Schich, and Gisa Wassenberg. The aforementioned information would indicate that prisoner losses were not great. However, there is a document reporting that on December 2, 1944, there were only 172 prisoners in the camp.⁷ Thus, it is safe to assume that knowledge of the subject is far from complete.

The guards at the camp were SS women. A German woman, Lucia (Luiza) KIoversa, initially held the post of Lagerführerin (camp leader) (September–October 1944). Elizabeth Spar was her successor. The guards were German women: Helena Hezar, Hilda Steinhofer, Magdalena Hazler, and Toni Kniefel.⁸

Almost all the prisoners were put to work at VDM, which manufactured aircraft parts at the former C. Dierig textile plant. The work was split up into two 12-hour shifts, six days...
a week. Once a week, on Saturday, the VDM management gave the prisoners an extra food ration of 0.5 kilograms (18 ounces) of bread and 0.2 kilograms (7 ounces) of sausage. However, the SS guards would often take the extra ration away from them under any pretense.

A small group of women worked on the camp premises.

There was no infirmary at Sackisch. A dentist, Rosa Kacenelson (camp number 51221), and a prisoner doctor whose name is unknown provided medical assistance to their fellow prisoners.9

The Sackisch subcamp was not evacuated. Work was halted at VDM in April 1945. For the final weeks of the war, 100 women were put to work building a road in what was then the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia; the others did odd jobs (such as cleaning or peeling potatoes) in the homes of local Germans.

T. Szmaragd described the moment of liberation in her account: “During breakfast the morning of May 8, we noticed changes in the Germans’ attitude toward us. Our SS-Kommandoführerin came to us and told us that we were free and could leave the camp. The SS-men themselves escorted us to the Czech border in Nachod. They gave the Czechs a list of our laborers, leaving us, and we did not know where they had gone. The Czechs escorted us to lodgings in Nachod, fed us, and replaced our striped uniforms with dresses. After three days in Nachod, we went our separate ways.”10

There were two trials of camp staff members after the war in Poland. The first Lagerführerin, Kloversa, born November 17, 1921, was tried by the Wrocław Special Criminal Court and was sentenced to three years’ imprisonment on January 23, 1946. She left prison on January 15, 1949. Guard Hilszer, born November 4, 1919, was tried by the Kłodzko District Court. Sentence was passed on December 31, 1946. She was sentenced to eight years’ imprisonment. She left prison on October 8, 1953.

SOURCES There are no references devoted entirely to Sackisch. Certain information about it may be found in Alfred Konieczny, “Kobiety w obozie koncentracyjnym Gross-Rosen” (Studia Śląskie, seria nowa, vol. XL (1982)), and in Bogdan Cybulski, “Obozy podporządkowane KL Gross-Rosen” (Rogoźnica, 1987).

The archival material on Sackisch chiefly consists of accounts of former prisoners of the camp, on file mainly at the AMGR in Walbrzych and the AZIH in Warsaw, as well as the trial records for the female SS officers from the camp staff, at the AK-IPN WR. There are also copies of these records at the AMGR.

NOTES

1. AK-IPN WR, OKBZHW, sygn. [Catalog No.] Ds. 35/67.
2. AZIH, Account No. 208—Tauba Szmaragd.
3. AMGR, Catalog No. 7/119/VII/MF—Orders to make numbers.
4. AMGR, Catalog No. 4346/DP—Transportliste.
7. ITS, Gross-Rosen materials.
8. AMGR, Catalog No. 4/429/MF—Letter from Kłodzko Municipal Court dated October 24, 1946, to the GKBZHwP.
10. AMGR, Catalog No. 4/429/MF—Letter from Kłodzko Municipal Court dated October 24, 1946, to the GKBZHwP.

SCHATZLAR

The forced labor camp (ZAL) was probably established, under the auspices of the Organisation Schmelt, in Schatzlar (Záceléř) in June 1942 and lasted as such until 1944, when it became a Gross-Rosen subcamp. The small subcamp was established before June 9, 1944. It remains unknown how many of the initial young Jewish women and girls in the forced labor camp were taken over by the subcamp. The official documents appear to confirm that the camp was not only under the authority of the “SS-Kommando Trautenau, Parschnitz” but was combined with the nearby and much larger Berndorf camp. The difference between the two labor camps was probably what hindered their complete merger.

At Schatzlar the prisoners had to work in the spinning mills of the Fa (Firm) Gustav Adolf Buhl-Sohn. In any case, the female camp commander and three other wardresses were responsible to the Berndorf camp command. In addition to the 111 women in the camp, 15 Jewish women from Wiesau arrived there in December 1944. The total number grew from 120 to 130 female inmates. The camp structure and conditions were similar to those in Berndorf. The end of the camp coincides with its liberation by the Red Army on May 8, 1945. The prisoners, together with the military prisoners, helped to remove tank traps. A unique and interesting document, a manuscript of a drama with the title “Der Traum der Künstlerin” (The Dream of a Female Artist), was created in the camp and written in German. According to the author, Celine Richter, from Budapest, it is a “playful tragedy.” The manuscript has been preserved as part of the trial documents used against Emma Mach, the camp commander in Schatzlar. The play was indeed dedicated to her and is dated May 5, 1945. It was performed in the camp by a group of young female Hungarians. Mach claimed before the court in Jičín that she and her husband helped the Jewish women. Despite her claims, she and M. Mühl from Berndorf were found guilty for being members of the SS and given a prison term.1

In Olomouc well-known professor of German studies Ludvík Václavek has devoted his attention to a specific topic, a play that originated in the Schatzlar camp by Jewish women from Hungary: “Lágr je sen?” (Literární dokument z koncentračního tábora při žaclerské prádelně z roku 1945), in Stati o německé literatuře vzniklé v českých zemích (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 1991).

Basic sources and transport lists of the prisoners from the Gross-Rosen subcamps in northeast Bohemia are located in the SÚA in Prague, with copies in the AG-T (Terezín). The most important files are those of the Special People’s Court in Jičín 1945–1946 (Criminal Trials against the Former Wardresses). Finally, the firm archives at Texlen Trutnov contain important sources on the camps in the Trautenau area as referred to in the files of the German textile firms for the years 1940 to 1945. Nevertheless, the sources are inadequate.

Miroslav Kryl
trans. Stephen Pallavicini

NOTE


SCHERTENDORF

A Gross-Rosen subcamp came into being as the result of the evacuation of Jewish commandos from occupied areas and was set up in unplanned fashion in Schertendorf (now Przyłep), a village almost five kilometers (three miles) from Grünberg (Zielona Góra). The purpose was to make use of the manpower in Zielona Góra armaments factories. The camp was located in barracks designed for warehouses. There were three of them, but only one was used. The area was fenced in, and there were two guard huts and a gate. According to accounts by local people and forced laborers, there were over 100 young Jewish women and men in Schertendorf. Blahe, a noncommissioned SS officer with the rank of Oberscharführer, served as the subcamp commander.

The prisoners worked at Christ ü Co and Beuchelt (now Zastal), which were armaments companies. The prisoners were escorted to work every day in two columns, women and men separately. They were conveyed by guards in navy-blue uniforms. The guards were specially trained. The prisoners were dressed in gray clothing and wore wooden clogs. The women were very badly treated; they were beaten for any reason; they were hungry and ate apple peels. Some Germans gave them extra food, hiding it in the machines. The camp was closed in early February 1945. The prisoners were probably sent toward Szczecin.

There is no proof of homicides having been committed in the camp.

SOURCES

This entry relied heavily on AMGR, sygn. 6500/DP, OKBZH at Wrocław: Report of Proceedings on the Slave Labor Camp at Przylep, Zielona Góra County, witness testimony; and on AMGR, Catalog No. 8751/34/DP, collection of Roman Olszyna’s materials on the Schertendorf subcamp of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp.

Leokadia Lewandowska
trans. Gerard Majka

SCHLESIERSEE I

The camp at Schlesiersee (present-day Ślawa) came into being as the result of the evacuation of Jewish commandos from occupied areas. In early October 1944, a transport of 1,000 Jewish women arrived from Auschwitz, and the women were used to form the Schlesiersee I commando. Another transport of 1,000 women arrived at the end of the month, and then a second camp (see Gross-Rosen/Schlesiersee II) was formed. According to other researchers, 2,000 Jewish women from Poland and Hungary were sent from Birkenau to Schlesiersee on October 22, 1944; 1,000 of them, assigned numbers 70001 through 71000, were put on Count Haugewitz’s eastern farm, Neue Vorwerk: Schlesiersee I. The prisoners were lodged in a barn and slept on hay. In the center was a stove, which was only used when some fuel had been collected. Sanitary conditions were ghastly. The water pump was in the barnyard and froze in the winter. There was no soap or towels. The food was insufficient. Many of the girls had frostbitten feet, as they had no footwear. Although diseases were frequent, people remember no incidences of shooting prisoners. There was a doctor, but medical aid was inadequate.

Karl Herman Jeschke held the post of Lagerführer (camp leader), and Joseph Kowatsch was Rapportführer (report leader). Krause, Hoffman, and Graetz are among the staff members mentioned in documentation regarding the camp. The women worked at the Kraus company and digging trenches. Three kilometers (almost two miles) south of the camp buildings, they dug trapezoidal antitank trenches 3.5 meters (11.5 feet) by 4 to 6 meters (13 to 20 feet) at the top. The excavated earth had to be spread. Conditions became very hard when the earth froze in December.

Evacuation occurred suddenly on January 21, 1945, at 10:00 P.M. The prisoners had to abandon camp immediately. Sick women were transported on carts and wheelbarrows pushed by their fellow prisoners. The column reached the village of Stary Jaromir on January 25. The sickest women were loaded onto three carts; supposedly they were going to be taken to the hospital. They were carted off to the woods 1 kilometer (0.6 miles) from the village, and there they were
shot upon an order from Jeschke. The remains of 41 victims were unearthed in an exhumation conducted after the war. As Bernard Robinson relates, one prisoner survived the massacre, Waleria Straussova. Severely wounded, she wandered through the fields for two days. She found shelter with Maria Wojciech, a resident of the village of Wijewo. The evacuation column advanced toward Wójnow [or Wójnowo]. The column reached the Grünberg commando on January 28. The women were emaciated, ragged, barefoot, and dirty. The sight of the column shocked the Grünberg prisoners.

They set out to continue their journey the next day after some of the Grünberg women joined them. The evacuation ended in the town of Volary in Bohemia only in May of 1945. Not many survived. For a more detailed description of the evacuation route, see Gross-Rosen/Grünberg I.


Leokadia Lewandowska
trans. Gerard Majka

**SCHLESIERSEE II [AKA PÜRSCHKAU]**

The Schlesiersee II commando was formed from the second transport of 1,000 Jewish women from Poland and Hungary that arrived at Schlesiersee from Auschwitz in October 1944. According to other researchers, Schlesiersee II was formed from the second half of a transport of 2,000 women that arrived from Auschwitz on October 22. They were put on Count Haugetzitz’s western farm called Bänsch. It was 1.5 kilometers (almost 1 mile) south of the village of Pürschkau (now Przybyszow). The prisoners were assigned numbers 71001 through 72000.

As at Schlesiersee I, Karl Herman Jeschke held the post of Lagerführer (camp leader), and Joseph Kowatsch was Raumführer (report leader).

The women were lodged in buildings for animals. They worked for the Kraus company and digging trenches. Evacuation was ordered on January 21, as at the Schlesiersee I subcamps. Both columns reached the Grünberg I subcamp on January 28. The next stage of the death march started the very next day, along with some of the Grünberg I prisoners, ending at Bergen-Belsen. The route is described in detail. See Gross-Rosen / Grünberg I. Only a few lived until liberation.

**ST. GEORGENTHAL**

A forced labor camp for Jews was established in St. Georgenthal (Jiretin) in 1943. Due to the lack of records on the later subcamp at St. Georgenthal, no specific information on its organization and operation is available. From Gross-Rosen commander Hassebroek’s letter of November 18, 1944, to Karl Hermann Frank, the Higher-SS and Police Leader (HSSPF) in Prague, it is known that he provided a figure of 50 female prisoners who were put to work in the communications equipment factory in 1944. The number of women was to increase to 700. It is unclear whether this actually happened, due to the lack of information in the sources. The letter notified Frank that according to Heinrich Himmler’s order, the Gross-Rosen camp headquarters was to file reports on the Gross-Rosen subcamps not only to the HSSPF in Breslau (Wrocław) (Schmeiser) but also to the HSSPF for the area where any of those subcamps operated. The list appended to the aforementioned letter confirms the information that there was a Gross-Rosen subcamp at St. Georgenthal. A document drawn up by the Czech country security agency just after the war contains the information that a maximum of 280 to 340 people lived in the camp. The total number of women who passed through the camp was 600, however. They were Jewish women of various nationalities: 31 percent Polish, 29 percent Czech, 28 percent Russian, 7 percent French, 2 percent Italian, and 3 percent of other nationality. Only 3 people died in the camp, including 2 of Polish and 1 of Russian origin; 1 of them died in the hospital at Trnovale, and her body was buried in the town of Hor. Tan vale. This fact was recorded in the register of deaths there. Two people were taken to the hospital in Liberci.

The prisoners probably lived in wooden barracks located on the premises of the factory in which they worked. They were put to work at the Sicht- und Zerl Werke dismantling aircraft that had been shot down.

According to Brandy Kiejzmann’s testimony,

St. Georgenthal was the worst camp (I had been at Ostrowiec and Auschwitz earlier). I was tortured at
St. Georgenthal, and so were others. Although Seliger did not have a bat, she would beat prisoners with her fist. The older women particularly suffered at her hand. The kitchen staff also suffered whenever she was dissatisfied. It was her doing that the bread ration was decreased. Whereas initially five people would get one loaf of bread per day, later one loaf was apportioned to fourteen people. If she caught someone stealing a potato, she would cut their hair off on the spot. Then they wouldn’t be allowed to put a kerchief on their head for the next few days. She would also beat them.

Hanna Seliger was one of the Aufseherinnen (female guards). Sara Kiejzmann describes Seliger’s behavior toward the prisoners as follows: “She was particularly brutal: shortly before the war ended, she beat two prisoners unconscious. ... Before liberation, she broke one woman’s arm with her bat [sic]. She killed yet another woman for making her bed unduly. There were also many other sadistic acts, which I cannot express in words.”

A woman named Margot was the Lagerführerin (camp leader). She knew of the methods that Aufseherin Seliger used, yet she did nothing to stop her sadistic outbursts. Former prisoners relate that she too was afraid of Seliger. The other Aufseherinnen were also afraid of her, as they contended with the possibility of being sent to a penal commando. The other guards were also severe, but they did not beat the women when they noticed they had stopped working. Seliger repeatedly instructed them to perform their duties “better.”

There is no information for this camp on the existence of an infirmary or on the medical help provided there. Two reports provide only information on the dental procedures performed. Romana Silberschlag examined prisoners in January 1945, but only from January 20 through 25. She also served in that position at other camps, such as the Kratzau II and Zittau subcamps. Another prisoner, Hanna Chwat (camp number 53943), was serving as dentist by the next month.

The camp was liberated on May 9, 1945. Defendant Seliger testified that she and 14 young women had been recruited to work at the subcamp. According to a list of staff assigned to guard the respective subcamps, 9 female SS guards kept watch at camp.

Ida Otto was an Aufseherin at the camp. She served at the Parschnitz, Graben, and St. Georgenthal camps from October 1944 to May 1945. After the war, she was accused of beating and kicking prisoners and chopping off their hair. There was insufficient evidence to support those charges as a basis for sentencing. She was found guilty because she had belonged to the SS. She received a sentence of six years in prison and the confiscation of her property.

**NOTES**

1. AMGR, sygn. [Catalog No.] 2829–DP, Secret Diary.
2. AMGR, Catalog No. 6779–DP, Czech County Security Agency information on Gross-Rosen concentration camp and the St. Georgenthal subcamp, from ca. 1945.
3. AMGR, Catalog No. MF 70/4255, Polish Army Mission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in the British Occupation Zone of Germany, September 4, 1946.
5. AMGR, Catalog No. MF 122/113, Records of case against Ida Otto.

**TRESKAU**

It is not known when the camp at Treskau (present-day Owińska, near Poznań) was established. The first reference to it in surviving German records is dated August 30, 1943. However, two of the numerous accounts of former prisoners say that the camp was already in existence in early 1943.

The camp was in the basement of one of the buildings in a barracks complex dating back to World War I. Between the wars, the buildings had housed a facility for people with psychiatric conditions. The invading Germans slaughtered the patients by November 1939, and the SS took over the facility for barracks. The following units were stationed there: Totenkopfstandarte (Death’s Head Regiment), then Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler (Bodyguard Regiment Adolf Hitler), and finally the SS-Junkerschule (Elite Officers’ School), which had been transferred there from Brunswick.

A subcamp was established because the SS school needed renovating and expansion. The prisoners were men, mainly Russian and Polish, but there were Czechs, Ukrainians, and Germans as well. All accounts agree that the camp population was approximately 100 to 110 prisoners. The population did not change because there were regular small transports from the main camp, often of just a few people, to replace the dead or the seriously ill who were removed to Gross-Rosen. One prisoner reports that the population had been reduced to 50 people in November 1944. Another prisoner estimated that several men died every week. Prisoners died of emaciation; executions were not performed in Treskau.
There was no infirmary in the camp. There was only a prisoner who served as an orderly; he had a medicine kit and administered first aid. Aside from that, the prisoner orderly went to work normally with everyone. The names of two orderlies are known: Franc Grabowski served in the job until December 1943, and after his death, it was medical student Stanisław Dziadus, who had been brought from the Gross-Rosen main camp. Dziadus served as orderly until he escaped from the Treskau subcamp in May 1944.

The first Lagerführer (camp leader) known by name was SS-Scharführer Alfred Juchelek, a German born on November 4, 1911, in Katowicz (later Katowice). He had been at Treskau since August 1943. He was promoted to the rank of SS-Unterscharführer prior to December 13, 1943. In February 1944, after the death of camp elder (Lagerältester) Emil Schwarz, he was dismissed from Treskau. Then an SS man, whose name is unknown, assumed the job of Lagerführer. He was at Treskau for a very short time. The next Lagerführer was SS-Rottenführer Diener, who came from Serbia. The date that Diener was dismissed is unknown. All that is known is that he was already at the Gross-Rosen main camp on January 26, 1945. After him, another SS man whose name is not known was Lagerführer until the camp went out of existence.

German criminal prisoner Emil Schwarz initially held the post of Lagerältester; he was singular in his aggressiveness and brutality toward his fellow prisoners. On February 18, 1944, he was murdered by Wołodia Nosyr, a young Russian prisoner. When Nosyr was caught, he was taken to the main camp at Gross-Rosen and hanged there. A Czech political prisoner named Karel became the new Lagerältester. The aforementioned German criminal Grabowski (concurrently the orderly) was the Kapo in charge of the largest work group, the construction group. He was shot accidentally in December 1943, and a German named Max was appointed to replace him. The new Kapo was brought to Treskau with Dziadus, who assumed the post of orderly. Life was less severe at Treskau after Max and Dziadus arrived; they managed to stand up to Schwarz. There was more freedom within the confines of the basement walls, and the fear of speaking, even to another prisoner, disappeared. Hygienic conditions in the quarters also improved somewhat.

The prisoners primarily worked constructing auxiliary buildings for the school: stables, a covered riding area, garages, a movie theater, and a rabbit pen. They were divided into three labor commandos: construction; water and sewer ditch digging (the Vorarbeiter [foreman] here was a Pole, Stefan Rajski); and the smallest, the gardening commando (Gartenkommando—the Vorarbeiter was a Ukrainian named Boris), which worked planting lawns, flower beds, borders, hedges, and so on. According to the International Tracing Service (ITS), prisoners also worked building an airport. That information is plausible. In actual fact, there was a small airfield in the town of Bednary several kilometers from Treskau. Luftwaffe detachments had been stationed there since August 1941. Prisoners also were sporadically sent to do odd construction jobs in Treskau itself. In the spring of 1944, approximately 10 prisoners working in the Gartenkommando were trucked under escort to the Fabianowo section of Poznań. The SS barracks construction warehouses were located there. There was also a prefabricated frame house on the premises. The prisoners’ job was to level the site around the house and to plant a garden. The prisoners worked there for about a week. The house’s owner, an SS doctor with the rank of Obersturmführer, who worked at a Poznań hospital, would bring large amounts of dry bread and give it to the prisoners working at his house as extra food. The work in Poznań stopped after several days, and the prisoners were put into the commandos building the garages and the rabbit pen in Treskau.

On May 11, 1944, three prisoners escaped from a work site in the woods near Treskau: Poles Dziadus and Stanisław Purgał and Lithuanian Władysław Wysocki. Purgał was shot immediately upon escaping by the SS man guarding them. Dziadus was caught near the town of Koło about two weeks later. In June, he was moved from the prison in Koło to the Gross-Rosen main camp and put in a penal company. Wysocki was probably successful in escaping.

According to Apolinary Sztybel’s account, on Christmas 1944, an SS man let the prisoners cut down a tree in the woods and decorate the Christmas tree in camp. He also got them an extra portion of food and gave each prisoner two packs of cigarettes. He also sang Christmas carols in Polish with the prisoners. For the prisoners, that was intensely moving.

The evacuation of the Treskau subcamp began on January 20, 1945. The prisoners were prodded along on foot to Poznań. There they were loaded onto railway cars and taken to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. It is unclear how many prisoners left the Treskau camp; according to historian Alfred Konieczny, only 60 men from that transport were admitted at Sachsenhausen.

**SOURCES**

There are no monographic essays on the Treskau camp. There is encyclopedic information in B. Cybulski, *Obrazy podporządkowane KL Gross-Rosen (stan badań)* (Rogoźnica, 1987). Also of great value are the recollections of former prisoner Stanisław Dziadus, “Historia jednej ucieczki” (unpub. typescript from MSS, AMGR in Wałbrzych).

The available archival material on the Treskau labor camp has been collected at the AMGR in Wałbrzych. It is chiefly composed of surveys, accounts, reports of interviews, and correspondence with former prisoners of the Treskau camp.

Barbara Sawicka
trans. Gerard Majka

**NOTES**

2. AMGR, Catalog No. 5902/40/DP—Testimony of former Gross-Rosen prisoner Władysław Strzopa; AMGR, Catalog No. 3107/DP-A—Questionnaire of former Gross-Rosen prisoner Apolinary Sztybel.

4. AMGR, Catalog No. 8751/64/DP—List Pawła Wójcika.

5. AMGR, Catalog No. 6910/DP-A—Ankieta Mariana Szczepanika.

6. AMGR, Catalog No. 5902/41/DP—Protokół przesłuchania świadka Bolesława Litwina z 25.01.1974 r.

7. AMGR, Catalog No. 8751/64/DP—List Pawła Wójcika.


WALDENBURG

Walderburg (present-day Wałbrzych) is located in the foothills of the Sudetes Mountains approximately 70 kilometers (43.5 miles) south of Wrocław.

There was a labor camp here for Jewish men, under the command of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. The fact is documented by accounts of former prisoners and court materials from postwar trials of staff members and prisoner-functionaries, as well as by the surviving original German list of Waldenburg labor camp prisoners. The exact date the camp was formed has not been established. According to information in the International Tracing Service’s Verzeichnis der Haftti siten, the Waldenburg camp came into being in early 1944, having been converted from a forced labor camp for Jews (Zwangsarbeitslager für Juden, ZALfJ). The findings of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland move the opening date forward to September 1, 1944, having been transported in by train several days later, this time from ZAL Klettendorf. Thus the camp reached a population of 565 prisoners in the first days of its operation. Some changes occurred that same month. On October 28, 1944, 57 prisoners were sent back to Gross-Rosen for unknown reasons, and a group of 58 Jews were brought in to replace them, having been taken out of two transports that had arrived at Gross-Rosen in mid-September 1944 from the Krakau-Plaszow concentration camp. In subsequent months, there were only slight changes in the camp’s population: 7 prisoners were sent to Gross-Rosen on November 23, 1944, and 4 were sent on December 9. Then in January 1945, 31 men were brought to Waldenburg; according to one prisoner’s account, they were “prisoners from various camps who had gotten lost during the evacuation and wound up near Wałbrzych.” Two prisoners were sent to the Wüstegiersdorf subcamp on February 18.

The prisoners from the Freiburg and Klettendorf transports were assigned numbers 64201 through 64765. The Krakau-Plaszow transport ranged in numbers from 69366 to 69912 and 74431 to 74847. The prisoners incarcerated in January received numbers 97029 through 97059. This group included two Hungarian Jews who initially had been assigned numbers 97014 and 97015, only to have them changed a few days later to 44786 and 45033; those prisoners were then sent back to Wüstegiersdorf.

The Waldenburg camp was for Jews. Polish Jews from Upper Silesia and Małopolska (Lesser Poland) predominated. There was also a small group from Western Europe.

The camp was located in the southern part of town in the Stadtpark section (present-day Gaj, the Królewicza Street area). The area was wooded. Railroad tracks ran near the camp. The road running along the camp buildings led to a facility (plant[s], mill[s], or factory[ies]) at the coal mine, at which facility the prisoners worked.

The camps had not been finished when the first prisoners were admitted in October 1944. Two identical-looking two-story cinderblock buildings were finished. There were eight living quarters (sztuba) in each, four on the first and four on the second floor. Each sztuba was intended for 30 prisoners. There were toilets and washrooms in the corridor outside the chambers, and there was a shower in the basement. The barracks were also equipped with a central heating system. However, neither running water nor heat was connected for some time. The quarters’ furnishings were standard: three-decker bunks, a table, and stools, all new. There were no straw mattresses or wool or cloth blankets. The prisoners slept on straw and had paper bedspreads for covers. The camp buildings also included an administration building. It was a long one-story brick barrack that held the kitchen, hospital/infirmary (Rever), sewing room, canteen (Schreibstube), and a large room the prisoners called the “dayroom,” which was adapted into living quarters after the group of 58 prisoners from Krakau-Plaszow arrived. In time, the entire camp premises were surrounded by a double fence of barbed wire, and the inner one was electrified. Outside the fence there was a building for the SS staff.
Living conditions at Waldenburg were relatively good. New accommodation buildings with new undamaged furnishings, a sewage system, hot and cold running water, and central heating were not standard in camps of this type. However, the prisoners' food was insufficient. Bread, coffee, and watery soup did not supply the hardworking men with an adequate amount of calories. Every month the daily food rations grew smaller. Immediately after arrival at camp, prisoners received striped clothing, caps, and wooden clogs. In the winter, sweaters and coats were also distributed.

There was an infirmary at the camp: an outpatient room and a ward with beds. Three doctor prisoners serviced it: a dentist, a surgeon (a young Warsaw doctor named Czarnmarka), and a general physician (a Czech Jew). The food there was somewhat better. On occasion, sick patients would even get milk soup with saccharine.

There were only four deaths recorded throughout Waldenburg's operation, and that was in the spring of 1945, by which time the prisoners were very weak due to the emaciating labor. In the spring of 1945, by which time the prisoners were very weak due to the emaciating labor and insufficient food.

The camp day began with a wake-up call at 5:00 A.M. After breakfast and roll call, the prisoners were divided into groups and left for work. A smaller group worked finishing and expanding the camp. Most of the prisoners were escorted by SS men to a construction site called the Baustelle, about 500 meters (1,640 feet) away. According to information in the International Tracing Service's Verzeichnis der Haftanstalten, chiefly construction and assembly work was done there for the following companies: Hoch und Tiefbau AG, Philip Holzmann, IG Farben AG, AEG (Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft; General Electric Co.), and Synthetic Benzop—Fabrik Mathildenhöhe. Work at the construction site lasted 10 hours, with a meal break from 12:30 to 1:00 P.M. Upon returning to camp, the prisoners were counted, and there was an evening roll call, at which people weak by work were often additionally tortured by exercises. There were roll calls with mandatory exercises on Sundays, too.

The camp was guarded by the SS staff. SS-Unterscharführer Schrammel was the commander. A former prisoner depicted him as follows: "A known murderer of prisoners at other camps, he behaved completely differently at Waldbrzych. To us he was above all a merchant. He loved money and derived satisfaction from accumulating it... At such times (when he would sell prisoners cigarettes and tobacco), the man, usually inaccessible, would take off his jacket and collect the money from everyone by himself." The same witness continues by relating Schrammel's attitude toward the camp he was in charge of: "The Lagerführer has paid a lot of attention to the infirmary and it's important for him to get as much medicine for patients as possible. You could describe him in one sentence: he wanted his camp to be the best; he allowed anything to be brought to camp, but wouldn't let anything be taken out." He could punish people severely for the slightest violation of camp regulations, such as stealing potatoes or disobeying orders. He beat people, set dogs on them, and abused them by ordering what was called "athletics," which consisted of a prisoner having to wallow on the ground while he brutally walked all over the person laying there.

The Waldenburg camp was not evacuated. It operated until the end of the war. As the front approached, the work at the Baustelle stopped, and the prisoners were put to work building trenches in the environs of the city. The SS staff and commander left the camp on the night of May 7–8, 1945. The Waldenburg camp then ceased to exist.

**SOURCES**


**NOTES**

1. AMGR, Collection of Surveys, sygn. [Catalog No.] 6201/DP-A.
2. AZIH, Account No. 2089.
3. Ibid.

**WEISSWASSER**

During World War II, the Vereinigte Lausitzer Glaswerke (United Lausitz Glassworks) produced, in addition to jars for conserved food, medicine bottles and cooking utensils, and glass parts for armored vehicles, mines, and the V-1 flying bomb. In 1944, the plant Malky Müller & Co. (Bärenhütte) in Weisswasser (Biała Woda), that had been owned by the Dutch Philips company since 1920, became the relocation site of the Philips-Valvo Factory in Aachen. A transport of 300 mostly Hungarian Jewish women and children was organized at the beginning of September 1944 to Weisswasser, which became a Gross-Rosen subcamp. The women had been selected by a Philips-Valvo Factory representative in Auschwitz. The prisoners were accommodated in three barracks in Weisswasser located on Kromlauer Weg and the corner of Neuteichweg.

Edit K., a survivor of Gross-Rosen with prisoner number 6191, related that a civilian radio manufacturer sought the prisoners out and promised that they would be treated well. They were chosen not only on the basis of their age, but also after an examination of their eyes and hands. After a month they were taken to Weisswasser for work. When they arrived, they found very clean barracks. Each room held 16 people and...
the evening, they marched back to their barracks. While her sister, Klara, wired radios or lamps for aeroplanes. In when they walked—that was the wooden shoes. They always their trip home the girls had made bags out of corrugated were only allowed to return to the barracks under guard. For The prisoners were always hungry. She did the soldering, The prisoners were put in various groups, including assembly, dusting down, and laboratory. They lived in wooden barracks, one hundred women per barrack, which were surrounded with barbed wire. Five men from the Wehrmacht were constantly guarding them. There were 16 female SS wardens, a female commander named Berta Frank (née Metzig, from Hamburg), as well as a female head of the group. They were watched from every possible angle and were not permitted to speak to anyone. They were completely isolated.

Margot K., from the town of Weisswasser, reported that her father made pistons at the Philips factory in Bärenhütte, later Lüsenhütte. In 1944, he came home very annoyed as he had not earned any money. There were new people, he said, who dusted down, but who had no skill and caused a lot of damage. They were young Jewish women with shaved heads. There was a female warden from the SS-Wehrmacht (his term) sitting on a revolving chair on each corner of the room where her father worked at Lüsenhütte. To eat, the prisoners had old tin cans with a handle—they were given food which was quickly eaten so that they could get seconds. The women were only allowed to return to the barracks under guard. For their trip home the girls had made bags out of corrugated boards with a string—many looked quite good. They rattled when they walked—that was the wooden shoes. They always had cloths over the poor clothing they wore.

Elizabeth W., a survivor with prisoner number 61266 from Gross-Rosen, said that the prisoners' work day began with a march to the factory accompanied by an SS guard. When they arrived at the factory they were given breakfast, soup, which they ate in a room separate from the German workers. For the rest of her life, she said, she would only remember those meals. The prisoners were always hungry. She did the soldering, while her sister, Klara, wired radios or lamps for aeroplanes. In the evening, they marched back to their barracks.

Paula R., another Weisswasser survivor, born in Hungary and a Jewish prisoner of Gross-Rosen with prisoner number 61234, said that she was 13 and the youngest in a group of women. They came from Auschwitz and were chosen because of their good eyesight and dexterity. All their SS wardens were women. Each of them had a nickname which matched their “qualities” and crimes against the prisoners. The head wardress was called the “Devil,” her assistant the “Leach,” her best friend the “Death Kapo,” and so on. The prisoners worked 14–16 hours a day and were fed daily 1,000 calories—they suffered terribly from hunger and thirst. They were often beaten when they could not do the work and did not achieve the quotas. They could only go to the toilet once a day. Diarrhea was treated as sabotage. The first group, to which her sister belonged, sometimes sat on an open wagon on the factory grounds, a wagon on which potatoes were loaded. A few girls could not control themselves and ran to grab a few potatoes. When they came back they were brutally beaten by the wardens. Then they were put in isolation. The wardens injured the prisoners physically and psychologically. Their lives were nothing. As a youth, she said, Paula was strongly influenced by the older generation. She saw Jewish inmates treated like animals, and guessed that people in Weisswasser saw this but did nothing.

An official report on the Weisswasser subcamp by the local police branch Weisswasser/OL dated February 5, 1946, pursuant to order no. 163 by the Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SMAD), stated that there were 300 female Hungarians in the camp. The police could not provide a list of the Hungarian citizens as they were not insured by the local hospital insurance fund and all other documents were destroyed as a result of the war.

In the original Weisswasser camp workers book held at Yad Vashem Archives (YVA), the names of all 300 women and their prison numbers are listed together with the work location and the person in charge of each section. The women were aged from 13 to 34 years. There was one recorded death in Weisswasser, prisoner number 61178, Györgyi Kandler (born: Kisvarda, Hungary, October 27, 1925); she died on September 21, 1944, at 10:30 a.m. The entry was made after a verbal report by the female camp commander Berta Frank. She stated that she voluntarily reported the death and that the woman had died from injuries and fever.

The camp was evacuated on February 26, 1945, after heavy bombardment by the Red Army. The women had to walk to Senftenberg and then were taken in wagons to Hornenburg, where there was another Philips factory. Three weeks later, on March 30, 1945, they were transferred to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Those who survived were liberated by the British Army on April 15, 1945.

**SOURCES** On the wartime production of the glass factory Lausitz, see _Geisibichte des VEB Lausitzer Glas Weisswasser_ (1989).

There are few archival sources on the Weisswasser subcamp. YV in Jerusalem holds the original camp workers book in which all the names and prison numbers (from the Gross-Rosen concentration camp), the work sites, and those in charge of each section are listed.

_Gudrun Albrecht_

trans. Stephen Pallavicini

## WIESAU

Wiesau (present-day Łaka) is located approximately 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) north of Bunzlau (now Boleslawiec). Information about the camp at Wiesau indicates that at various times there was also a Jewish men’s forced labor camp (Zwangsarbeitslager für Juden, ZALfJ) there, as well as a woman’s subcamp of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp.
According to a former prisoner's account, a forced labor camp (ZAL) for Jewish men was established at Wiesau in October 1942. The first transport of 500 prisoners arrived at four newly erected wooden barracks. The buildings were surrounded by barbed wire. The whole camp covered an area of approximately 20 square kilometers (7.7 square miles). The kitchen was outside the barbed wire in the SS staff's barrack.

Besides the men, there was also a group of approximately 20 Jewish women prisoners; they did things such as working in the kitchen and doing laundry. On May 10, 1944, the ZALfJ (FAL) Ludwigsdorf under the command of the Gross-Rosen kitchen was outside the barbed wire in the SS staff's barrack.

The ZAL Wiesau men worked building a sewage system and a factory that was near the camp. The prisoners' food for an entire day was composed of 350 grams (approximately 12 ounces) of bread and some margarine and a dinner of soup made from greens, rutabaga, and potatoes. Besides the hunger and strenuous labor, the prisoners suffered intensely from the tortures administered by the Lagerführer (camp leader) (according to a former prisoner's account, the Lagerführer was named Drobrk). The favorite form of punishing prisoners for being disorderly or unclean was to douse a prisoner standing in a barrel full of water with a stream of cold water. This caused the exhausted people to faint, in consequence of which they drowned to death.

ZAL Wiesau was probably closed in May 1944. The prisoners were examined by a panel of doctors and divided up into two groups. The healthy ones were sent to the newly formed Gross-Rosen concentration camp. The prisoners went to work, as well as upon their return. Medical care was provided by an orderly picked from among the prisoners.

According to the information in the International Tracing Service's Verzeichnis der Haftstitten, there was also a Gross-Rosen subcamp at Wiesau. The first reference to a camp of this type dates from September 1944. It held female Hungarian Jewish prisoners. The women worked for the Küppers company, anammunitions factory.

Copies of six transport rosters dated December 7, 1944, confirm that information. The rosters contain the names of Hungarian Jewish women (a total of 68). On December 7, 1944, they were moved from Wiesau to the following Gross-Rosen subcamps: FAL Ober-Alstadt, FAL Bernsdorf, FAL Parschnitz, and FAL Schatzlar. The prisoners listed in the rosters had numbers in the 60506 to 60996 range, which indicates, according to the chronology of Gross-Rosen transports, that they had been admitted to the camp in September 1944. Unfortunately, no information on camp living and working conditions is available.

According to Verzeichnis der Haftstitten, the last reference to the Wiesau subcamp is from January 1945.

**ZILLERTHAL-ERDMANNSDORF**

A forced labor camp for Jews (Zwangsarbeitslager für Jude, ZALfJ) was formed at Zillerthal-Erdmannsdorf (Mysłakowice) in the autumn of 1940. Jewish women were sent there as manpower for a nearby factory belonging to the Erdmannsdorfer Leinenfabrik corporation.

The labor camp was converted into a subsidiary of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp in late May and early June 1944. The women, now concentration camp prisoners, received numbers on round tags worn around the neck.

Girls and young women aged 13 to 25 lived in the camp. Initially, the population was approximately 100 people; subsequently it rose to about 200. However, the number of women incarcerated at the camp was probably greater. Transports from such places as Sosnowiec and the Auschwitz concentration camp were sent here. Original records are unavailable, so it is difficult to determine how many such transports there were or their size. The prisoners lived in two barracks, unheated in the winter, containing double-decker bunks. The barracks had washbasins in which the women washed and did their laundry; the toilets were outside. The food was poor and insufficient for the work done by the prisoners. Reveille was at 6:30 A.M. Roll calls were conducted in the morning before the prisoners went to work, as well as upon their return. Medical care was provided by an orderly picked from among the prisoners. However, basic medicine was in short supply.

After the camp was transferred to Gross-Rosen's administration, the women continued to work in the Erdmannsdorfer factory in the weaving and spinning departments; they also spooled flax from fields in the vicinity. The factory manufactured cloth for German army uniforms. Work lasted from 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. There was a short lunch break at about 1:00 P.M. German civilian foremen oversaw the women at work and also ordered and inspected the work.

No one can say how many deaths there were at the camp, although there were such instances, due to malnutrition. Scurvy and lice infestations were rife among the prisoners. There were also selections; sick prisoners and those unfit for work were taken away.

SS members comprised the staff. There is no specific information on how many of them there were; all that is known is that they occupied a separate barrack at the camp.

The subcamp operated until January 17, 1945, when it was ordered evacuated. The prisoners were probably divided into two columns. The first reached the Gablonz camp (a men's...
subcamp). They were disinfected and their heads were shaved; then they were placed in a camp prepared especially for them. They were put to work in an ammunition factory as well as doing various other work on factory and camp premises. The prisoners were liberated on May 8, 1945.

The other group was sent to the town of Morchenstern (Smržovka), where the women stayed about three weeks, after which they were transported to the Mauthausen concentration camp.

**SOURCES** A useful source for this topic is the work of Alfred Konieczny, “Kobiety w obozie koncentracyjnym Gross-Rosen w latach 1944–1945,” *Śląz* 40 (1982): 55–112; as well as the work of Aneta Małek, “Praca w systeme KL Gross-Rosen,” published by the AMGR in 2003. Portions of both works are devoted to this topic. The works are available in Polish.

The archival sources on this topic are few. The accounts of a female former prisoner are available in the AMGR. Information on this topic is also located in the materials of the GKBZHwP.

Aneta Małek
trans. Gerard Majka

**NOTES**

1. The information about the number of female prisoners and life in the camp comes from the account of the former prisoner (AMGR imprint 2658/DP).


**ZITTAU [AKA KLEIN-SCHÖNAU]**

Within the context of the transfer of the aircraft industry to areas that were less prone to air attack, the Zittau firm Gebrüder Morus AG received word on September 20, 1944, from the Reich Air Ministry (RLM) of the transfer of the Junkers Aircraft Works from Dessau: “The firm Junkers Aircraft and Motor Works AG (transferring enterprise) is tasked to transfer the production [facilities] of its factories in Dessau and Magdeburg into the space occupied by the firm Gebrüder Morus AG . . . Zittau in Saxony (receiving enterprise), in accordance with the transfer notice sent with the communication of August 16, 1943.” In this connection, the transferred Junkers enterprise received the cover name “Zitt-Werke.”

In addition to hundreds of civilian forced laborers and prisoners of war (POWs), the Junkers Works also still sought to receive concentration camp prisoners for work in Zittau. They were successful in their negotiations with the SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA), in part because of support from the RLM. A representative of Zitt-Werke sought suitable prisoners in Auschwitz. Because this was the period—late summer of 1944—when the large deportation transports from Hungary were arriving in Auschwitz II–Birkenau, 500 mostly Hungarian Jewish women were selected. In the report of the former prisoner Monica Elizabeth H., one finds the following: “Someone came from Zittau, where they needed five hundred women (from Auschwitz). Thus the transport was formed.”

On October 28, 1944, with this first transport of women from Auschwitz, the Zittau subcamp was established. The women and girls received registration numbers from the series 83000 to 84000 from the Gross-Rosen main camp, to which the Zittau subcamp was subordinated. A large part of these women hailed from Budapest, others from Szolnok, Tocso in the Carpatho-Ukraine, and Colanto.

With a transport of 250 men from Buchenwald on January 27, 1945, a men’s Gross-Rosen subcamp was also established at Zittau. In this case, the prisoners were Polish and Hungarian Jews. When the Gross-Rosen subcamp at Görlitz was temporarily evacuated to Rennersdorf on February 18, the SS brought a group of 100 prisoners to Zittau. Likewise, in February 1945 the number of female prisoners in Zittau rose because of a transport of about 300 women from one of the two subcamps in Kratzau (Chrustava).

There is still little clarity concerning the exact number of female or male prisoners in Zittau. Moldawa speaks of several hundred prisoners; Main Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes (OKBZH) maintains that there were 5,000. Former Polish prisoner Dr. Kulig even gives a count of 8,000 Jewish men and women in Zittau, which probably reflects the temporary accommodation of various evacuation transports from Gross-Rosen subcamps to the east of Zittau, such as Hartmannsdorf, in the Zittau camp.

The establishment of the accommodations for both the male and the female prisoners went forward in the barracks complex in Kleinschönau (later: Sieniawka) and on the grounds of the then estate Grossporisch (later: Porajów), as a result of which the camp was occasionally known as Klein-Schönau.

Through an agreement of June 3, 1944, the entire barracks facility was taken over by the Junkers Aircraft and Motor Works Dessau, Zittau Branch, which had, in fact, been using it since December 1943.

The camp leader (Lagerführer) was SS-Oberscharführer Horst Klehr, although there was also an SS-Oberscharführer Hoerster, who signed many SS documents. No information is available about the number of SS guards and female SS overseers. On February 4, 1945, a part of the Gross-Rosen command staff was transferred to Zittau and remained there about one week, up until its further transfer to the Reichenaub camp, near Gablonz. Also, a liquidation site (Abzwicklungsstelle) of Auschwitz was located in Zittau for a time.

Because of increasingly frequent instances of pregnancy among the Hungarian and Slovakian prisoners who had been deported in late spring or early summer via Auschwitz to the Gross-Rosen subcamps, the SS faced the problem of how to deal with these pregnant women. In Zittau, the top floor of a camp building was converted into a delivery station. Women from other nearby Gross-Rosen subcamps, including Ober-Hoheneihe, Liebau, Sackisch, and presumably also Kratzau, were brought there before their deliveries. After the delivery,
some of the women and their children were sent away. According to Alfred Konieczny, 10 children received registration numbers from Gross-Rosen (from 96951 to 96960) and then were transported from Zittau to Langenbielau. Because one of the children, with the registration number 96957, died on April 17, 1945—two days after its birth—it is possible that this was just such a transport.\(^{13}\) Gertraude S., born Sojka in Berlin in 1909 and deported from the Slovakian Nitra in 1944, wrote, “I . . . was deposed because of my Jewish heritage and found myself in the Kleinschönau camp in Kreis Zittau, where also my child was born. Now I am located in the Kreis women’s clinic in Watzdorffheim. After my release, which should follow in the coming days, I wish to travel to Prague and from there to Nitra, Slovakia, in order to trace my husband. I want to take the urn for my child with me, because as a Czechoslovak citizen I wish to have my child’s remains buried in my homeland.”\(^{14}\)

All survivors describe the food situation in Zittau as catastrophic and for many as fatal. Former prisoner Zdzislaw M. testified that “[i]n the Zittau camp we received starvation rations, which consisted of one hundred grams [three and one-half ounces] of bread, as well as a bowl of hot water with potato peelings.”\(^{15}\) Hungarian Monica Elizabeth H. wrote: “We were hungry, such that we dug into the ‘muck heap’ in order to find some potato peelings to eat. The hunger was terrible. I can only describe it as the greatest agony . . . We had only one wish, to just have a whole loaf of bread.”\(^{16}\)

From the available records, it emerges that 9 women and 90 men were registered as having died in the Zittau camp between February 4 and May 7, 1945.\(^{17}\) Whether there were already deaths before that period, since the camp existed with female prisoners, and how many died in Zittau after the liberation on May 8, 1945, remain unknown.

Just as there is a connection between the very high number of prisoners in the camp and other subcamps’ evacuation marches that passed through Zittau, there may be such a connection with the number of dead given by Dr. Kulig, who was himself evacuated from the Gross-Rosen subcamp Hartmannsdorf to Zittau. During his witness interview, he said:

The rest of the still surviving prisoners [sick] were evacuated to Zittau via motorized transport on March 19, 1945. The group of SS who had come to the camp to evacuate it shot those prisoners who could not leave the camp under their own power.

After my evacuation from the Hartmannsdorf camp I found myself, up until my liberation by the Soviet army, . . . in the Zittau subcamp . . . On May 5, the SS men marched out toward the west with a group of five thousand prisoners. At that time I stayed in the camp with a large group of sick prisoners. I am not capable of providing the names of all the ill prisoners who died in the camp. Many died during their confinement in the camp, and many after the liberation.\(^{18}\)

Dr. Molenda, likewise evacuated from Hartmannsdorf to Zittau, also said in a statement: “After the liberation, a group of us who were healthier, under the leadership of Dr. Kulig, occupied ourselves with burying the dead prisoners, as well as with transporting the still living prisoners to the local hospital, with the agreement of the Soviet city commander.”\(^{19}\)

**NOTES**

2. BA-B, Bank der deutschen Luftfahrt, Nr. 138.
7. See BA-L, IV 405 AR-Z 222/69, p. 189, statement Dr. Kulig.
8. Ast-ZI, Nr. IIc-1-26-Nr. 10, pp. 63–64.
9. Ibid.
12. NARA, T 976, Roll 21.
13. Ast-ZI, IVb-II-1 Nr. 6-2368, p. 184.
15. BA-L, IV 405 AR-Z 222/69, p. 260, statement Zdzislaw M.
17. Ast-ZI, Bestattungsamt, Kriegstodesfallmeldung, I-II-1, Nr. 6-2368.
18. BA-L, IV 405 AR-Z 222/69, p. 189, Aussage Dr. Kulig.
19. Ibid., p. 260, statement Dr. Molenda.