MITTELBAU SUBCAMP SYSTEM

The Mittelbau concentration camp is regarded as the last National Socialist main concentration camp. It was established in the autumn of 1944 from a dense system of Buchenwald subcamps in the area around Nordhausen, the center of which was the Dora camp. This camp was established in the late summer of 1943 for the purpose of expanding the subterranean Mittelwerk. Rocket production began in January 1944. The Mittelbau concentration camp was known to the public as a rocket concentration camp (Raketen KZ). The establishment of the majority of the other camps in the Mittelbau complex was only indirectly connected with the assembly of rockets. Using the subterranean rocket factory as a model, countless new underground facilities were to be established for Junkers, which was to relocate its various factories underground, and for the development of subterranean facilities for the oil industry. The SS, whose construction arm was under the command of SS-General Dr.-Ing. Hans Kammler, gathered tens of thousands of concentration camp prisoners, for which subcamps would be established close to the planned subterranean facilities. The name of this gigantic construction project was formulated in March 1944 at the headquarters of the Junkers company: Unternehmen Mittelbau. In October 1944, it became the name for a concentration camp complex independent of Buchenwald. Dora, on the other hand, was the name of a Buchenwald subcamp that later became the main camp of the Mittelbau concentration camp (the name “Mittelbau-Dora” encompasses both phases of the camp’s development: the Dora subcamp and the independent Mittelbau concentration camp).

From March 1944, as part of the relocation of the Junkers sites, several Buchenwald subcamps were established in the vicinity of the Dora camp. The camp at Rottleberode (code name “Heinrich” or “Kommando A5”) was established in the middle of March 1944. There followed at the beginning of April the Harzungen camp (code name “Hans”) and, at the beginning of May 1944, the Ellrich-Juliushütte camp (code name “Erich”). The latter was the largest and most feared camp in the subcamp complex. Here, on the site of an unused gypsum factory, an average of 8,000 prisoners labored under catastrophic conditions, packed together very tightly, until they were evacuated at the beginning of April 1945. In Harzungen there was an average of 4,000 prisoners, and in Rottleberode, around 1,000 prisoners.

The camps established after April 1944 were a little smaller in size. Their inmates were used on construction work to improve the infrastructure for the armaments center that was being established in the Nordhausen area, for example, the construction of the Helmetalbahn (the railway at Helme Valley). Along this planned railway line, which was to improve the connection from Nordhausen to northwestern Germany, there arose in the summer and autumn of 1944 several smaller subcamps, whose inmates were the 1,000 prisoners that were assigned to the SS-Baubrigaden (Construction Brigades) III and IV.

Although the newly established camps were part of the Buchenwald main camp, there was from the very beginning a tendency to centralize administrative matters in the Dora camp. This was especially so for the Ellrich-Juliushütte and Harzungen camps, whose prisoners were used to excavate the shafts for the new underground facilities close to the Mittelwerk. The Labor Deployment (Arbeitseinsatz) Office in the Dora camp made the decision to send newly arriving prisoners or prisoners who had been in the Dora camp for a longer period of time and who, because of their physical constitution or lack of skills, did not seem usable in the rocket production that had begun in January 1944 to the surrounding camps. In the seven months from April 1944 to the time when the Mittelbau-Dora complex became an independent concentration camp, more than 17,000 prisoners were transferred in this way to the camps at Ellrich, Harzungen, and Rottleberode. The Arbeits einsatz office in Dora was given extra tasks, which if the guidelines of the SS-Business Administration Main Office (WHVA) had been followed should have been allocated to the Arbeits einsatz office in the main concentration camp. The WVHA took this development into account when in the summer of 1944, at the insistence of the camp commandant Förschner, it assigned to the Dora camp SS-Untersturmführer Alois Kurz, from Auschwitz, as Arbeitseinsatzführer.

Gradually, the Dora camp took over other administrative areas of the main camp. For the SS this was a saving in time and cost, as it could forego the establishment of facilities in the new subcamps, as they were already in the Dora camp. Seriously ill prisoners were treated, if they were treated at all, not in the subcamps but in the Dora camp’s infirmary or they were transferred back to the main Buchenwald camp. Here were located arrest cells in which prisoners from the subcamps were incarcerated. From no later than the autumn of 1944 the administration at the Dora camp took over the distribution of food and clothing. Altogether there were countless cases of interdependence and interplay between the Dora camp and the other subcamps in the region.

It was not only functional factors that prompted the Südharz (south Harz) subcamps to strive for independence but the fact that the SS camp leadership, despite its formal connection to the Buchenwald concentration camp, was under the direct command of SS-Gruppenführer Kammler. This meant that as early as June 1944 there was an organizational shift. The Dora camp was named “Mittelbau I,” and the surrounding camps were all named “Mittelbau II.” This change was of short duration, as the strong growth of the Ellrich and Harzungen camps meant that the Mittelbau complex was again reorganized on September 10, 1944: the Dora camp was known as “Mittelbau I,” the camps in Ellrich and Harzungen were now known as “Mittelbau II” and...
“Mittelbau III.” At the same time, the guards from the SS and the Luftwaffe in the Mittelbau garrison were put under the command of the five companies of the SS-Wachkommando of the Standortführung Mittelbau, which included the guards for the camp of the Baubrigaden III and IV in Wieda, Nüxei, Mackenrode-Tettenborn, Osterhagen, and Ellrich. A little later the SS-Eisenbahnbaubrigade I in Berga and the SS-Baubrigade V in Sollstedt became part of the Mittelbau garrison. The independence of the Mittelbau concentration camp in October 1944 was therefore a purely formal act. In addition to the already mentioned camps, on October 28, 1944, the Buchenwald subcamps of Klosterwerke Blankenburg, the camp at the company Curt Heber in Osterode, the Heinrich camp in Ennewald subcamps of Klosterwerke Blankenburg, the camp at the already mentioned camps, on October 28, 1944, the Buchenwald subcamps of Klosterwerke Blankenburg, the camp at the company Curt Heber in Osterode, the Heinrich camp in Rottleberode, and the SS-Baubrigade V were transferred to the Mittelbau concentration camp.

After Mittelbau became an independent concentration camp, it established other subcamps, many of them as part of subterranean construction projects, for example, the camps “Dachs IV” near Osterode (November 1944) and Regenstein near Blankenburg (February 1945), which with 400 to 900 inmates were part of the medium-sized Mittelbau camps. Other camps were much smaller. The first camp established in March 1945, Ilsenburg, whose inmates had to construct a high-voltage power line. had only 15 Italian military internees (IMIs). When the SS, at the beginning of April 1945, evacuated the Mittelbau camps in the face of the approaching U.S. troops, the Mittelbau concentration camp with its 40 subcamps had more than 40,000 inmates. This includes the SS-Baubrigaden stationed in the Nordhausen region, which in January 1945 were formally under the command of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. They remained based at their garrisons even though functionally they were part of the Mittelbau concentration camp.

The SS established its most horrid Mittelbau camp in January 1945 in the Nordhäuser Boelcke-Kaserne. Initially planned as accommodations for prisoner detachments at the Nordhäuser armaments manufacturers, it developed into the main sick and death camp for the Mittelbau concentration camp. This development occurred no later than after the arrival of the evacuation transports from the dissolved Auschwitz and Gross-Rosen concentration camps at the end of January 1945. At the end of March 1945, there were almost 6,000 prisoners in the camp. During its three-month existence, it was the place of death for almost 3,000 people.

The subcamp at Boelcke-Kaserne reflects the character of the Mittelbau concentration camp as a system. Contrary to most other main concentration camps, the Mittelbau concentration camp was a camp system that was given specific functions within the overall camp system. It was the totality of camps that made the Mittelbau concentration camp, a camp that stretched over the whole of the Harz. The towns and villages in the region, in one sense, formed islands of civilian life in a dense landscape of concentration camps.

SOURCES The first academic publication to deal with the Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp subcamp system was by Manfred Bornemann and Martin Broszat in Studien zur Geschichte der Konzentrationslager (Stuttgart: DVA, 1970), pp. 154–198. The most important of the more recent studies of the whole Dora concentration camp, including the development of Mittelbau concentration camp, include works by Joachim Neandert, Das Konzentrationslager Mittelbau in der Endphase der nationalsozialistischen Diktatur: Zur Geschichte des letzten im “Dritten Reich” gegründeten selbständigen Konzentrationslagers unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Auflösungsphase (Clausthal-Zellerfeld: Papierflieger, 1997); André Sellier, Histoire du camp de Dora (Paris: Éditions la découverte, 1998); and Jens-Christian Wagner, Produktion des Todes. Das KZ Mittelbau-Dora (Göttingen: Wallstein-Verlag, 2001). The latter has contributed the only work that focuses solely on the subcamp system: “Das Außenlagersystem des KL Mittelbau-Dora,” in Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager: Entwicklung und Struktur, ed. Ulrich Herbert, Karin Orth, and Christoph Dieckmann (Göttingen: Wallstein-Verlag, 1998), pp. 707–729. The work by Erhard Pachaly and Kurt Pelny, Konzentrationslager Mittelbau-Dora: Zum antifaschistischen Widerstandskampf im KZ Dora 1943–1945 (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1990), contains long passages on the genesis of the subcamp system but is not recommended due to trade defects and factual errors.

The most important source on the prisoner transports to the Mittelbau concentration camp and individual camps within the system are the Veränderungsmeldungen der Lagerverwaltung as well as transport lists and prisoner lists from the Mittelbau camps (Transportliste und Haftungsaufstellungen), which are, however, only fragmentary and held in a variety of archives (including the ITS: Mittelbau-Ordner und Sachdokumentenarchiv, TSHSa-W: Bestände, NS 4 Bu, and KZ and Haftanstalten Buchenwald; VVA: Microfilms BD1-Bu19–BD3-Bu44 and BD11-Dol–BD11-Dol6). An important documentary collection is the files from the U.S. military trial of those responsible for the Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp that took place in Dachau in 1947 (NARA, RG 238, Microfilm Publication M-1079, United States Army Investigation and Trial Records of War Criminals, USA v. Kurt Andrae, et al., 16 Reels).

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NOTES

1. NARA, M-1079, Roll 12, frame 239, USA v. Kurt Andrae, et al., Interrogation of Wilhelm Simon (former SS member in the Dora camp Arbeitsinsatzbüro).
2. The final reorganization of the camp was ordered in a “Sonderbefehl der SS- Standortführung Mittelburg,” September 10, 1944, AG-MD, 50.14.3/3.
4. Verfügung des SS-Wirtschaftsverwaltungs-Hauptsamtes zur Verselbständigung des KZ Mittelburg, October 28, 1944, Sta-N, NO-2317. As with the subordination of the SS-Eisenbahnbau Brigaden VII and VIII, the incorporation of SS-Baubrigade V, based in Stuttgart, was of a purely formal nature. Functionally, there was no connection between these mobile prisoner detachments deployed in parts of Germany and the German-occupied areas in the autumn of 1944 and the Mittelbau concentration camp.
ARTERN [AKA ADORF, REBSTOCK NEU]

As part of the underground relocation of rocket production in the autumn of 1943, the steel construction firm Gollnow und Sohn, originally based in Stettin, commenced production in an unused railway tunnel near Dernau in Ahratal (Rheinland-Pfalz). The underground facility was used to produce the ground-based mounts for the A4 (Aggregat 4) rocket. Formally, the facility, called “Rebstock” or “Vorwerk West,” was owned by the Mittelwerk GmbH. From the end of August 1944, Gollnow und Sohn used a few hundred concentration camp prisoners from the nearby Buchenwald Rebstock subcamp, established to support the underground production facilities.

The Rebstock camp did not last long. In the face of an advancing front, the Gollnow company relocated its machines and personnel in stages in the autumn of 1944 to Artern, about 30 kilometers (18.6 miles) southeast of Nordhausen. It recommenced production, under the code name Fa. Geyer und Sohn, in facilities confiscated from the Kyffhäuserhütte and the Malzfabrik “Goldene Aue” AG. Even though the relocation of the machines had begun in October 1944, the production of A4 ground facilities in Artern did not get beyond the initial phases by the end of the war.

The Gollnow/Geyer firm relocated not only its machines from Ahrtal to Thüringen but also its personnel, including the concentration camp prisoners in the Rebstock camp. At the end of November 1944, the first transport left Dernau with just 100 prisoners. With the transfer of the remaining 199 prisoners to Artern, the SS finally closed the Rebstock camp in December 1944. At the same time, the Artern camp (also known as “adorf” or “Rebstock neu”) was then under the control of the Mittelbau concentration camp. On November 20, 1944, 30 prisoners and, five days later, 20 prisoners were sent from Mittelbau to Artern as an advance work detachment.

The Gollnow or Geyer civilian employees were quartered in a number of private dwellings. The SS initially accommodated the prisoners in temporary facilities in a gymnasion. Later, they were transferred to a newly established barracks camp close to the Malzfabrik (malt factory), which had a barbed-wire fence and guard towers.

For the prisoners, the relocation to Artern meant a dramatic reduction in the quality of their living conditions. They were no longer used primarily in production but in the physically draining work of construction and transport in building the production halls. In addition, the sanitary conditions in the gymnasion and later in the incomplete barracks camp were extremely poor, and the prisoners were crammed into the barracks. At the beginning of 1945, there were around 350 male prisoners in the camp, who had been transferred to Artern from Dernau and the Mittelbau camps at Dora and Kleinbodungen. Overwhelmingly, the prisoners were Polish, French, and Russian. The number of prisoners decreased in the middle of January 1945, when around 80 prisoners were transferred to Mittelbau, but increased a month later when more than 100, mostly Jewish, prisoners, some of whom were severely injured, were taken into the camp from a rail transport. The prisoners had left Buchenwald in the middle of February 1945. They were moving in the direction of Halberstadt when, while close to Artern, they were attacked from the air. The SS left a few of the injured in the Mittelbau infirmary. At least 18 died in Artern, where there was scarcely any chance of medical care for the injured.

The SS recorded 30 deaths in the camp for February and March 1945. They were victims not only of inadequate medical care but also of the poor sanitary conditions in the camp and mistreatment by SS members and Kapos. The camp leader, SS-Hauptscharführer Karl Schmidt, was feared by the prisoners. From 1943–1944, he had been in command of the infamous Buchenwald subcamp “Laura.” His deputy, SS-Unterscharführer Hans Klerch, who had arrived in Artern in January 1945 from Auschwitz, was also feared. The SS installed as prisoner-functionaries mostly German prisoners who wore the green triangle of the “criminals.” The camp elder was Gustav Hartmann. An exception was the camp recorder, Dr. Hans Wolff, a political prisoner.

At the beginning of April 1945, both camp leaders ordered the evacuation of the camp in the face of the approaching U.S. Army. Around 100 prisoners left the camp by rail in the first days of April in the direction of Bergen-Belsen. On April 5, 1945, the remaining prisoners in Artern were forced by the SS to march in two columns from the camp. They marched for three days to the Buchenwald subcamp at Rehmsdorf (Tröglitz). A few days later, they were loaded into open goods wagons. Thus began a journey by rail that lasted for a week, as they wandered through Saxony and Czechoslovakia. The journey ended on May 8, 1945, when the survivors were freed by Czech partisans close to the Austrian border.

After the war, the Gollnow und Sohn firm relocated to West Germany, where it was later taken over by Rheinmetall. None of the SS perpetrators in the Artern camp were tried. Several investigations that took place in the 1970s and 1980s into members of the SS, including the former camp leader Schmidt, were discontinued. However, the statements by former prisoners and Gollnow civilian employees, which were taken as part of the investigation, today form the basic source for the camp’s history.


The most important source for prisoner transports to and from Artern are the Mittelbau-Dora Veränderungsmeldungen (THStA-W, KZ Buchenwald u. Hafta Nr. Dora Dok./K 395). Extensive collections of the investigation files on the history of the Rebstock and Artern camps are held at the ZdL (now BA-L), which has file 429 AR-Z. 191/72, and the Sta. Koblenz, which has Aktenzeichen 101 4 Js 268/86. Files on the Kyffhäuserhütte and Malzfabrik “Goldene Aue” are held in the postwar Demontageakten in the LHSA-Ma (Rep. K 6 MW, Nr. 5981).

**BALLENSTEDT (NAPOLA)**

Very little information is available on the Ballenstedt subcamp established on March 17, 1945, in the building of the Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt (Institution of National Political-Education, Napola) on the Ziegenberg near Ballenstedt. Its purpose, the date it was closed, and the fate of its inmates remain to be uncovered.

According to a former Napola student, the camp’s almost 60 inmates were accommodated in the assembly hall of the main Napola building. The assembly hall was separated from the rest of the building. The SS guards were accommodated elsewhere on the Napola grounds. A few prisoners are said to have worked on constructing a pond for firefighting on the Napola grounds. It is possible that the camp was established for the Junker firm’s construction department, which for air-raid protection reasons had been based in Ballenstedt since 1944, where it administered the Junkers construction projects of the Mittelbau firm.

**SOURCES**

There is no published research on the history of the Ballenstedt camp, and there are no known prisoner memoirs. The establishment date of the Ballenstedt camp is based on the Mittelbau concentration camp strength reports (Veränderungsmeldungen) that are held in the THStA-W (KZ Buchenwald u. Hafta Nr. Dora Dok./K 395). Eyewitness reports are held in the collection on the Ballenstedt camp located in AG-MD.

**NOTE**


**BLANKENBURG-OESIG**

(“**KOLOSTERWERKE**”)

The two camps close to Blankenburg, “Klosterwerke” and “Turmalin,” were an exception within the Mittelbau complex: unlike most of the other Mittelbau camps, they were not in Südharz. These subcamps were located about 50 kilometers (31 miles) to the north of Nordhausen on the northern edge of the Harz Mountains, and their inmates did not have to work on the Kammler Staff construction sites but were employed by the Organisation Todt (OT). However, their labor was used exactly the same: the prisoners had to excavate underground caverns for the construction of planned subterranean factories.

Planning for both of the Blankenburg underground projects began in March 1944 when representatives of a number of Magdeburg armaments manufacturers traveled with geologist Professor Fritz Dahlgrün from the Reichsamt für Bodenforschung (Reich Office for Soil Research, RABF) to the north Harz to inspect sites that could be suitable for relocating armaments factories underground. They were successful in Blankenburg and other areas, particularly in the sandstone area at Regenstein and in the area around the ore-processing plant at Braunesumpf. After the trip, the representatives of the Magdeburg firms Krupp-Gruson and Schäffer und Budenberg announced that they wished to commence with excavation for underground factories. Shaft work began in May 1944 for the Blankenburg projects “Porphyrr” (also known by the code name “Klosterwerke”) and “Turmalin” (also known by the code name “Odawerke”).

The files that have survived do not clearly reveal for which company the “Porphyrr” caverns, excavated on the mine shaft entrance of the Braunesumpf mine under Michaelstein Mountain, were excavated. It was probably for the Krupp factory in Hamburg-Glindes, which planned to relocate the manufacture of crank shafts into the caverns, but it could also have been the Magdeburg Krupp-Gruson-Werk, which in the spring of 1944 planned to relocate its production facilities to another underground facility in nearby Hoppelberg near Halberstadt (subcamp Langenstein-Zwieberge).

German and civilian workers were first employed on the site, and later 60 Italian penal prisoners were used in construction. Concentration camp prisoners were not allocated to the construction site despite repeated requests to the SS. It was only in the summer of 1944 when the labor shortage increasingly hindered construction that the SS gave into the demands of the OT. On August 24, 1944, the SS transferred around 300 concentration camp prisoners from Buchenwald to Blankenburg, where they were accommodated in the newly established “Klosterwerke” subcamp close to the Blankenburg suburb of Oesig. Around three-quarters of the camp’s inmates were from Belgium. They had only recently been deported from Belgian prisons to Buchenwald in the face of the advancing Allies. Initially, the new subcamp was under the control of the Buchenwald concentration camp, but on October 28, 1944, it was transferred to the Mittelbau concentration camp.

As often happened when subcamps were first established, the prisoners initially had improvised accommodations. Albert van Hoey, who arrived with the first 300 prisoners in Blankenburg at the end of August 1944, later described the
camp as a “desolate place, secured with a three-meter [almost ten feet] high barbed-wire fence and high guard towers. There was a wooden barracks for the SS and forty-two Hitler Youth tents. Twelve prisoners slept in each tent. We slept on straw with our heads facing out and our feet to the middle.” A prisoner detachment of which van Hoey was a member had the task to construct barracks for the prisoners in the following months. The first barracks was occupied in October 1944, but it had no doors or windows. The other five accommodation barracks as well as a kitchen and infirmary barracks were ready by the winter.

All prisoners, with the exception of the functionaries and those constructing the camp or engaged in transport duties, were forced to work on the Porphy construction site, either above or below ground. Another work detachment was for a time involved in the construction of the nearby Gestapo camp for “Half Jews and Jewish Relatives.” Those prisoners were also forced to work on the OT construction site at the Porphy project.

Many prisoners quickly fell ill due to the harsh working conditions, chronic hunger, and the completely inadequate sanitary conditions in the Klosterwerke camp. There were no bathing or shower facilities. From the autumn of 1944, the death rate in the camp increased. Initially, the corpses were taken to the Quedlinburg city crematorium for cremation. Later, the SS had the corpses hurriedly buried in a trough outside the camp fence. After the end of the war, local citizens were ordered by U.S. soldiers to exhume the corpses and reinter them in the Blankenburg cemetery.

By the winter of 1944–1945, the number of prisoners had not increased in the Klosterwerke camp, initially controlled by Buchenwald and from the end of October 1944 by Mittelbau. In February and March 1945, the SS transferred more than 100 prisoners from the main camp and Boelcke-Kaserne to Blankenburg. Included in the transfer were many Polish Jews who shortly before had arrived in Nordhausen from Auschwitz. They, in particular, suffered from the terror and mistreatment by the SS and Kapos.

The treatment was to get worse when, in March 1945, the camp leader, SS-Oberscharführer Dieterich, was replaced by SS-Oberscharführer Hans Mirbeth from Auschwitz. The end of the Klosterwerke camp began on April 4, 1945, when 48 sick prisoners were transferred to the main camp. Two days later, the remainder of the camp’s inmates, as well as the inmates from the nearby camp at Turmalin, were forced to set forth on foot under SS supervision toward the Elbe River. The survivors of both camps (dozens of exhausted prisoners had been shot by the SS along the way) were loaded onto a river barge to the north of Magdeburg. The barge took them in a barn while the SS guards under the command of Mirbeth established themselves in the manor house. Around two weeks later, on April 30, 1945, the West European prisoners, who were the majority, were liberated. They were taken away by truck by the Swedish Red Cross to Lübeck and then were taken by ship to Sweden. All the remaining prisoners, including the Polish Jews, were taken on the same day by the SS on foot in the direction of Neustadt on the Baltic, where they were put onto two ships, already laden with thousands of Neuengamme concentration camp prisoners that were at anchor in the bight. One of the ships, the Cap Arcona, sank a few days later when attacked during a British air raid and became the tomb for an unknown number of prisoners from the Klosterwerke subcamp.

There has never been a judicial investigation into the Klosterwerke camp and the crimes committed on the death marches. The last camp leader, Mirbeth, was sentenced by the Bremen Landgericht (Regional Court) in 1953 to six years in prison, but only for crimes he committed in Auschwitz.

**SOURCES** Details on the camp and the Porphy construction project are to be found in the Mittelbau monograph by Jens-Christian Wagner, *Produktion des Todes: Das KZ Mittelbau-Dora* (Göttingen, 2001).


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**NOTE**


**BLANKENBURG-REGENSTEIN (“TURMALIN”)**

At the end of October 1944, the “Klosterwerke” camp in Blankenburg, established two months earlier, was put under the control of the Mittelbau concentration camp. At the beginning of February 1945, a second subcamp was established in Blankenburg, “Turmalin.”

The Turmalin project was the excavation of a subterranean facility under the Regenstein Mountain, a unique rock formation and popular excursion destination to the east of Blankenburg. Measuring devices were to be manufactured...
here for the Magdeburg armaments producer Schäffer und Budenberg GmbH under the code name “Odwert.” These were probably manometers for the A4 (Aggregat 4) rockets, which the company Schäffer und Budenberg had long been delivering to the Mittelwerk. This would probably explain why in February 1945 a Mittelbau subcamp was established close to the construction site.

The 400 prisoners in the camp, together with around 500 German and 300 foreign laborers, which at times included 200 Italian penal prisoners, were to excavate the caverns and construct the external facilities. The Turmalin project began in the spring of 1944 but was not completed by the end of the war. However, according to an American Combined Intelligence Objectives Sub-Committee (CIOS) team, the production of measuring devices did begin in part of the facility shortly before the arrival of U.S. military forces in April 1945. There were around 120 people producing the devices.

An essential reason for the slow progress in construction was the labor shortage. In the summer of 1944, the Grossdeutsche Schachtbau AG, which had been contracted by the construction department of the Armaments Ministry to excavate the cavern system, repeatedly demanded additional labor from the Einsatzgruppe IV of the Organisation Todt (OT), whose construction management oversaw the project. The construction firm was particularly keen in being allocated forced laborers. However, except for the 200 Italian penal prisoners, which were obtained through the firm Schäffer und Budenberg in July 1944 and who worked temporarily on the construction site, hardly any forced laborers were allocated to the site. It remains unclear why, unlike many other construction sites in the region, no concentration camp prisoners were used. For example, in the caverns only a few kilometers away at the Malchit underground project, several thousand prisoners from the Buchenwald subcamp at Langenstein-Zwieberge were used, and a few armaments firms in the Blankenburg area had used concentration camp prisoners since the spring of 1943—in Halberstadt and Wernigerode. That the OT Turmalin project was not allocated prisoners for a long time can only be put down to rivalry between the OT and the SS construction organization under SS-Gruppenführer Hans Kammler.

It was only at the beginning of 1945 when thousands of prisoners arrived in Nordhausen from the evacuated concentration camps at Auschwitz and Gross-Rosen that the SS acceded to the demands of the OT. On February 1, 1945, it relocated 400 prisoners, mostly Jews from the dissolved Auschwitz subcamp at Fürstengrube with their SS and Wehrmacht guards, from the main camp to Blankenburg. Here they occupied an OT barracks camp in a forested area at the foot of the Regenstein Mountain. The camp had been used by the OT, but it had never been finished. It was close to the so-called Lessingplatz and about 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) from the Blankenburg suburb Heers. For this reason, the camp was called by the local population the “Lessing camp.” As was customary with the establishment of a new subcamp, the SS camp command had the prisoners put up a fence around the camp and erect guard towers. After that, most of the camp inmates were used at the nearby construction site for project Turmalin in excavating the caverns.

The Mittelbau concentration camp appointed SS-Oberscharführer Max Schmidt as camp leader. He had previously been in command of the camp at Fürstengrube, working closely with German political prisoner Hermann Joseph, the camp elder. Schmidt led the evacuation of the camp, which began on the morning of April 6, 1945. With the exception of the inmates in the infirmary, who presumably were left in the camp, the SS drove the prisoners by foot past Magdeburg, where the survivors—a few dozen exhausted prisoners had been shot by the guards along the way—together with inmates from the second Blankenburg Mittelbau subcamp, Klosterwerke, were loaded onto a river barge on April 8. After the barge arrived in Lübeck, Schmidt marched the prisoners to the small village of Siblin, where the majority were crammed into a barn. Around 20 privileged prisoners, including members of the Fürstengrube camp orchestra, were taken by Schmidt to his parents’ nearby farm. Schmidt’s prisoners remained in the Siblin barn and on the farm between April 13 and 30. They were then marched to Neustadt on the Baltic, where, with the exception of West European and Czech prisoners who were put under the care of the International Red Cross, they were loaded onto ships, including the Cap Arcona. The Cap Arcona was attacked by British fighters on May 3, 1945, and became the tomb for more than 4,000 prisoners from the Neuengamme and Mittelbau concentration camps.

It is scarcely possible to determine how many prisoners survived the deportation from the Turmalin camp and the evacuation to the Baltic. What is certain is that many prisoners died in Blankenburg while suffering from the harsh working conditions in excavating the caverns. Finally, for many prisoners, their stay in Blankenburg was a murderous interlude on a monthlong death march from Fürstengrube to the Baltic, where many drowned with the sinking of the Cap Arcona.

The crimes committed in Fürstengrube, in Blankenburg, and on the death march to the Baltic were the subject of at least two proceedings. In 1948, the Ansbach Landgericht (Regional Court) sentenced former camp elder Hermann Joseph to several years’ imprisonment. Former camp leader Max Schmidt lived at first undetected on his parents’ farm near Siblin. In 1964, the Kiel state prosecutor commenced investigations into his wartime activities, but they were discontinued in 1973 without any convictions.

**Sources**

Important passages on the history of the Turmalin camp are contained in a publication by Gerhard Hoch on the long death march of the prisoners from Auschwitz/Fürstengrube via Blankenburg to Schleswig-Holstein: *Von Auschwitz nach Holstein: Der Leidenweg der 1200 Häftlinge von Fürstengrube* (Hamburg, 1990). Joachim Neander summarized the most recent research in a short essay, “Die Aussenlager ‘Turmalin’ (Regenstein), Quedlinburg und Trautenstein des KZ Mittelbau-Dora,” in *Erinnern: Aufgabe, Chance, Herausforderung* (Magdeburg, 2000), pp. 1–11. Details on the camp and...
the Turmalin construction project are to be found in the Mittelbau monograph by Jens-Christian Wagner, *Produktion des Todes: Das KZ Mittelbau-Dora* (Göttingen, 2001).

The relevant sources left by the SS have been microfilmed and are held in YVA (Microfilm BD11-Dol-6, ITS records on Mittelbau). There are other documents relating to forced labor in the collection of the ASt-Blb. Details on the Turmalin Mittelbau). There are other documents relating to forced labor; they are held in YVA (Microfilm BD11-Dol-6, ITS records on Mittelbau). There are other documents relating to forced labor; they are held in YVA (Microfilm BD11-Dol-6, ITS records on Mittelbau).

From the autumn of 1944, prisoners from the Mittelbau concentration camp were forced to construct power lines in Bleicherode. Initially, they were not accommodated in Bleicherode but in the main camp. At the end of each shift, the SS brought them back to the camp. In October 1944, the SS established a small labor detachment of 15 inmates in the cellar of the Bürgerhaus Hotel (the present-day city cultural center), all of whom were Italian military internees (IMIs). They worked for the construction and excavation firm Ohl & Vattrodt. There are contradictory statements about the nature of their work; it is possible that the Italians felled timber and transported materials, but they also could have been used to construct the power line from Frose to Bleicherode. The latter possibility is supported by the fact that in other sectors IMIs were forced to work on overlaid power lines (see Mittelbau/Trautenstein) but also because of the allocation of the camp to the SS-Baustab B-13, which coordinated all important infrastructure projects for the Mittelbau enterprise (Unternehmen Mittelbau).

There are no records of any deaths in the camp. The last time the camp is mentioned is in a surviving SS file from March 5, 1945; the camp most likely was in operation until April 1945. Its inmates were probably not evacuated by the SS but liberated by the Americans when they entered Bleicherode on April 10, 1945.

**SOURCES** The AG-MD holds a few reports on the Bleicherode camp.

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**NOTE**


**BLEICHERODE**

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**ELLRICH (“ERICH,” “MITTELBAU II”) [AKA ELLRICH-JULIUSHÜTTE]**

Founded May 1 or 2, 1944, Ellrich began as a subcamp of Buchenwald but was always intimately linked to the Dora subcamp in the southern Harz Mountains near the city of Nordhausen. On October 28, 1944, Dora became the Mittelbau main camp. Ellrich was officially named “Erich” and later “Mittelbau II,” designations that were scarcely used outside SS correspondence. It has also been called Ellrich-Juliushütte by later historians to distinguish it from other, much smaller camps in and around the town that gave it its name. It quickly became the largest subcamp of Mittelbau—and its most infamous. Health conditions were disastrous in the abandoned gypsum factory, the Juliushütte, that provided the main buildings for the camp, and the suffering caused by the exhausting construction work and long hours getting to and from the main work sites were further compounded by a particularly callous SS camp leadership.

The SS founded the camp to absorb part of the rapidly growing number of forced laborers needed for its many new underground projects in the region, which were created in the wake of great concern in the Nazi leadership over the Anglo-American bomber offensive. A particularly concentrated series of attacks on the German aircraft industry in late February 1944 led Armaments Minister Albert Speer to create a joint government-industry “Fighter Staff” on March 1 to promote a rapid buildup in fighter production. On the model of the Mittelwerk, the underground V-2 rocket factory moved to Dora, where much of this production was to be evacuated to tunnels, retrofitted or dug out by concentration camp prisoners, with construction leadership given to SS-Gruppenführer Hans Kammler, chief of the SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA) Amtsgruppe C (Construction). Kammler initiated a number of new tunnel projects in the soft anhydrite rock of the Harz Mountains near Dora, the most prominent being B-3, between the towns of Ellrich and Woffl eben, and B-11 and B-12, on either side of the Mittelwerk tunnels. After taking over a camp intended for civilians, creating subcamp Harzungen (“Hans”) on April 1, and a large estate house at Bischofferode, where a small camp, “Anna,” was set up at about the same time, the SS decided to make use of the Juliushütte buildings for another large camp. But these facilities were in such poor condition that they had to be repaired for some weeks in April. Even so, when the first 300 prisoners arrived on May 1, 1944, from “Anna,” there were not even roofs over some blocks housed in the abandoned factory, and the washroom and toilet facilities were disastrously inadequate.

Ellrich’s first commandant was SS-Untersturmführer Hans Joachim Ritz, but he is little mentioned in survivor accounts. In about August, he was replaced by SS-Untersturmführer Karl Fritzsche, an infamous sadist who had served as the first Schutzhaftlagerführer of Auschwitz from 1940 to 1942. After allegedly being removed from that position for incompetence at the behest of Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Hoss, the SS sent Fritzsche to Flossenbürg and then Ellrich. Fritzsche, who was an early Nazi Party and SS member, had been trained in Theodor Eicke’s school of terror as a camp guard in Dachau in mid-1933. Survivors stated that Fritzsche personally murdered and tortured prisoners and also harassed the guard force, which was largely drawn from the
Luftwaffe and officially transferred to the Waffen-SS only on September 1, 1944. At some point in the fall, Mittelbau commandant SS-Sturmbannführer Otto Förtschner sent Fritzsch to the Eastern Front and replaced him with Wilhelm Stötzler, who, like Ritz, made little impression on the prisoners, in large part because shortly thereafter SS-Hauptscharführer Otto Brinkmann was transferred from Mittelbau as de facto Schutzhaftlagerführer. Brinkmann rapidly acquired a reputation for sadism and brutality as appalling as Fritzsch's. Stötzler and Brinkmann served until the dissolution of the camp on April 5, 1945. Also infamous for his indifference to the suffering of the prisoners and for the poor condition of the makeshift infirmary was the camp physician, Dr. Günther Schneeman, originally from the Luftwaffe. The vicious, arbitrary, and sometimes incompetent camp leadership was rounded out by a series of "green triangle" (criminal) prisoners who served in prisoner administrative positions; although Förtschner ran Mittelbau on the Buchenwald model, using educated Communists, Ellrich became a dumping ground for both SS men and prisoners that Förtschner did not want. Ellrich often received the most ill and exhausted prisoners from Mittelbau and other camps, apparently on the assumption that they would have low chances of survival.

The impact of the bad sanitary and living conditions on the prisoners' health was greatly exacerbated by the work in outdoor construction and tunneling at B-3, B-11, B-12, and other sites but also by the incredibly long hours of work, plus travel times by rail and foot and the roll calls that had to take place before and after each activity. A typical schedule in the summer and fall of 1944 was awakening at 3:30 A.M., "breakfast" and roll call, march to the train station at 5:10, and labor from 6:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M., with a one-hour break. With luck the train would come on time to return the exhausted prisoners to Ellrich, followed by another roll call and watery soup that passed for dinner. All that was left was about five hours sleep, assuming that there were no lengthy delays with train transport and roll calls. Chief SS physician Professor Dr. Joachim Murgowski, later hanged in 1948 after the Nuremberg "Doctors Trial" for his role in human experiments, warned Kammler that with this schedule "many prisoners [were dying] without any acute cause, only out of exhaustion. In no other camp does this appear so often."

Ellrich's all-male prisoner population grew rapidly from 1,696 at the end of May 1944 to 4,104 at the end of July, to 8,000. The camp population paralleled that of Mittelbau, the predominant groups being Soviet, Polish, French, Belgian, and German, but Ellrich did receive a large number of over 1,000 "unclothed." With no wash facilities, either for inmates or their clothes, the Ellrich camp population soon became filthy, infested with lice, and dressed in rags. When an emergency delousing of uniforms was attempted in about October, many disintegrated, leaving a significant fraction of prisoners with nothing. The camp leadership showed its usual indifference and lack of initiative; the ample supplies of civilian clothes confiscated from prisoners were not touched until after new transports from Auschwitz and Gross-Rosen began arriving in January–February. Many of the "unclothed" had to spend the entire day in bed shivering under thin covers in filthy, unheated blocks, and some had to make outdoor roll calls in their underwear. Because these prisoners did not work, their rations were eventually cut in half, accelerating starvation and death. As the clothing situation improved in early 1945, the food situation deteriorated further to an episodic state of outright famine. There were even cases of cannibalism, and organized bands of prisoners stole from and terrorized the weak. As the transports from the east arrived with their utterly exhausted, mostly Jewish prisoners, overcrowding and disease only grew worse—hence the massive death toll in March. Yet this toll did not even include the 1,602 in bad condition who had been sent to the dumping ground of the Boelcke-Kaserne in Nordhausen on March 5.

As with the other Mittelbau camps, evacuation took place on April 4 to 5, 1945, with the approach of U.S. forces. Most of those evacuated were sent by rail in the direction of Bergen-Belsen. One survivor report stated that the last SS man shot a dozen sick prisoners in the head just before leaving, so that no one was liberated at Ellrich—the camp was empty when the U.S. 104th Infantry Division occupied the town on April 12. Soon thereafter the camp fell into almost complete obscurity; it straddled an old political boundary that became the demarcation line between West and East. Only the survivor groups remembered Ellrich, especially the French, who constituted a disproportionate fraction of the dead. Justice was also scarcely served. In the Mittelbau-Dora trial at Dachau in 1947, only 2 of the 17 convicted were singled out for their role in Ellrich: Otto Brinkmann, who received a life sentence, later commuted, and Richard Walenta, a camp elder (Lagerältester) noted for his collaboration with the SS in denunciations, who received a 20-year sentence, also later shortened. It was only with the increased attention paid to Mittelbau-Dora in the later 1980s, as a result of growing interest in rocket production in the Mittelwerk, that Ellrich finally began to be more widely remembered.

**Sources** Other than Manfred Bornemann's chronology, *Chronik des Lagers Ellrich 1944/45: Ein vergessenes Konzentrata-
Note


Ellrich/Woffl eben (Lager B-12)

Woffl eben was a spin-off of Ellrich, the largest subcamp of the Mittelbau concentration camp. On January 3, 1945, the SS moved 242 Ellrich prisoners from the night shift of tunnel project B-12 to a barracks outside the tunnel entrance, near the village of Woffl eben. This project to dig out a new underground factory was just to the west of the north entrances of the Mittelwerk/Nordwerk underground complex, in which Junkers Aircraft assembled aircraft engines and parts in the north section using civilian forced laborers, and Mittelwerk GmbH assembled V-2 missiles in the south section using SS prisoners from the Mittelbau main camp. The new tunnels of B-12 were to be used by Junkers for the assembly of last-minute weapons such as the Heinkel (He) 162 fighter but were never finished, as was the case with virtually all of the new tunnel projects launched in the spring of 1944.

For the prisoners, the January 1945 move was an immediate improvement, as conditions in Ellrich had been catastrophically bad, and the long transport by train to and from the work site, with accompanying marches and roll calls, made life even more miserable and cut significantly into their time to sleep. A further transport of 102 prisoners from Ellrich on February 4 and 650 from the main camp on February 21 greatly enlarged the camp, ushering in a period of overcrowding in spite of the addition of new barracks. The camp fluctuated in size from about 800 to 900 prisoners through the end of March. The first camp commandant is unknown; in mid-March, SS-Oberscharführer Kleemann, a Waffen-SS veteran who had been transferred in 1941 to camp duty after a war injury, took over Woffl eben. He had been camp commandant at Bismarckhütte, a subcamp of Auschwitz. The camp elder (Lagerältester), Bruno Brodniewicz, was also a veteran of Auschwitz, and both contributed to a further brutalization of prisoners in the camp. The death toll is unrecorded, as the
dead were sent to Ellrich for cremation; some severely ill were transported to the infirmary at Ellrich and the Mittelbau main camp. On April 1, immediately before the evacuation of the camp, Mittelbau transferred around 700 very ill survivors of transports from Auschwitz and Gross-Rosen to the Woffl eben subcamp, where they were scarcely able to work. The camp was dissolved on April 4 with an evacuation of prisoners by train in the direction of Bergen-Belsen. In 1951, Kleemann was tried in Itzhoe in Schleswig-Holstein for his barbaric behavior at Woffl eben and during the evacuation but was set free because of insufficient evidence.

Sources

Virtually nothing has been published on the Woffl eben subcamp other than passages in Wagner’s and Sellier’s books (cited in the Mittelbau main camp bibliography) and a section in Manfred Bornemann’s chronology Chronik des Lagers Ellrich 1944/45 (Nordhausen: Landratsamt Nordhausen, 1992), pp. 63–68.

The trial of Kleemann is to be found in Adelheid L. Rüter-Ehlermann, H.H. Fuchs, and C.F. Rüter, eds., Justiz und NS Verbrechen: Sammlung deutscher Strafrechtale gegen nationalsozialistischer Tötungsverbrechen 1945–1966 (Amsterdam: University Press of Amsterdam, 1972), 8: 333–350. Transports to and from Ellrich can be found in the YVA microfilm of ITS records (see the Mittelbau entry). See also the THStA-W Record Group NS 4/Bu., Buchenwald and Mittelbau records.

Michael J. Neufeld

Grosswerther

On Thursday, March 15, 1945, 294 women prisoners arrived at the Mittelbau-Dora main camp. They came from Morchenstern, a subcamp of Gross-Rosen, in the Sudetenland east of Gablonz. After registration, 290 of them were marched to the nearby village of Grosswerther. There, the SS had requisitioned the dance halls of two neighboring inns situated in the village center, Gaststätte Nolze and Zur Weintraube (aka Schönemann), to set up a new concentration camp—Aussenkommando Grosswerther, a subcamp of Mittelbau. The women were divided into two groups of roughly equal size, and each took up quarters in one of the dance halls.

All the women were Jewish, and all had started their odyssey through the gamut of Nazi concentration camps at Auschwitz: 248 of the prisoners were from Hungary and had been arrested in the course of the Judenaktionen during the spring and summer of 1944; 44 were of Polish origin; 1 came from France; and 1 from the Soviet Union. Most of the women were between 20 and 25 years old, and many of them had worked in textile manufacturing before their arrest.

There is evidence that during the three weeks of Grosswerther camp’s existence, only one single work detail of about 30 women was sent to—a still unidentified—factory at Nordhausen. No sooner had they begun work when they were interrupted by heavy air attacks of Nordhausen by Allied aircraft.

The Grosswerther camp’s provisional character was clearly evident by both its appearance and the living conditions.
From the outside, nothing particular indicated the existence of a concentration camp: no barbed wire, no watchtower, no people in the characteristic blue-and-gray-striped prisoner outfit. Both “blocks,” the former dance halls, were situated on the second floors of the inns, accessible to the prisoners only by the fire escapes, narrow flights of stairs that led into the courtyards, whose entrances were guarded by the SS.

The SS personnel were billeted in neighboring private homes and in the schoolhouse. These included SS-Oberscharführer Werner Beest, the camp leader (Lagerrführer); 4 SS guards, elderly Wehrmacht soldiers who had been drafted into concentration camp service; and 18 SS wardresses, who were responsible for “garrison duty” (Innendienst). Only the men carried firearms; the SS women had sticks with which they occasionally beat the prisoners.

The detail leader and chief of the female SS was Erna Pettermann. “She was a sympathetic but stern woman,” a survivor testified, “hated the Jews in particular, however, but never termann. “She was a sympathetic but stern woman,” a survivor.

Villagers still tell stories about the orgies the SS women had with men from the neighborhood, probably SS men from the Mittelbau concentration camp.

The prisoners at the Grosswerther camp, however, had nothing to celebrate. In the halls there were neither beds nor even pallets. The women slept on the bare ground, wrapped in their blankets. The stage of one of the halls had been transformed into an infirmary, where a Ukrainian prisoner doctor took care of her sick comrades. Sanitary conditions were appalling. There was no water and no toilet upstairs. Provisional toilets had been installed on the edge of the manure pit, and water had to be pumped from a well in the courtyard, which did not yield enough for so many people.

There were also no cooking facilities for the prisoners. Every day around noon a truck would arrive from Boelckekaserne, Nordhausen, one of the big subcamps of Mittelbau, and would bring food in large, uncovered tubs. “It was kind of slop in which only a few pieces of carrots, potatoes, or rutabagas were floating. If one of the Jewish prisoners would jump the line . . . she would be beaten on her hands by the female SS, her mess tin would be knocked out of her hands, and she would get nothing to eat.” The thin soup that the German eyewitness remembered so precisely still 43 years later surely was the infamous Judensuppe (Jew’s soup), which was absent of any nutritive value toward the end of the war.

The poor living conditions, however, apparently did not undermine the prisoners’ morale. Eyewitnesses from the village reported that the women were busy knitting sweaters, gloves, socks, and similar articles, which they offered to the villagers in exchange for food—not at all an easy task, as it had to be done secretly, unseen by the SS. We have also read about prisoners, probably Polish, who used to sing melancholy Yiddish songs in the evening, alone or in a group. These tunes occasionally even touched an SS woman’s heart. As the weather was fine that spring, the prisoners were even granted a walk in the open air—under SS guard, of course.

On the morning of Wednesday, April 4, 1945, the evacuation order from the Mittelbau main camp arrived at Grosswerther, and in the afternoon, the entire Grosswerther camp, 290 prisoners together with their camp leader, SS guards, and SS wardresses, started marching westward. In the morning of April 6, 1945, at Bischofferode, the prisoners refused to march further. The SS guards called Wehrmacht soldiers for help. Together they rounded the women up at the village square. There, the prisoners collectively fell down on their knees and complained bitterly “that they could not go ahead because they had no food. . . . [T]hey were too weak and not able to go on any more.” SS and soldiers gave in. They had the women stand up again. The Wehrmacht soldiers even arranged for a meal and also for trucks, which brought the whole group to Herzberg, the next railway station. Some 35 women had taken advantage of the general confusion at Bischofferode and had managed to escape. Some of them were caught and arrested. Those who hid successfully—among them at least 1, who was hidden by a German farmer’s wife—were liberated by the Americans on April 10, 1945.

At Herzberg station the remaining 255 Grosswerther prisoners were crowded into three boxcars, which were connected to an evacuation transport of the Dora camp. On April 7, 1945, U.S. fighter bombers attacked the train. Some courageous German prisoners opened the women’s cars in defiance of the orders of the SS. They paid a high price for this humane act, because the SS fired on those prisoners: 1 was killed, another severely wounded.

When the evacuation train had reached Austria, the cars with the Jewish women were disconnected and directed toward Mauthausen. Some 221 former Grosswerther prisoners were registered as “intakes” (Zugänge) for the women’s camp on April 15, 1945, 33 fewer than had been present at Herzberg. At least 1 of the missing had died in the air attack; the others had died en route or had managed to escape, as survivor testimonies suggest.

At Mauthausen, 44 women of the Grosswerther group still were put on work details. They were liberated by the Americans on May 5, 1945. Most of the former Grosswerther inmates, however, were marched off in a terrible death march toward Gunskirchen at the end of April 1945. The few survivors were liberated there also on May 5, by U.S. troops. No exact calculation can be made of the number of victims of the evacuation. If we estimate the number of dead until arrival at Mauthausen at 20, and the number of those who died in this camp, on the death march to Gunskirchen, and in that camp to half of the intake, we arrive at about 130 dead. This means that nearly every second woman who had left Grosswerther on April 4, 1945, was already dead four weeks later.

SOURCES On the Grosswerther camp, see Paul Lauerwald, “Das Aussenlager Grosswerther des Konzentrationslagers Mittelbau-Dora,” BHSKN 15 (1990): 26–31. The author, a local amateur historian, describes the living conditions in the camp, based above all on an interview with the daughter of one of the inns’ owners. Situating the Grosswerther camp within the framework of the forced labor concentration camps.
of the last phase of World War II is Joachim Neander’s “Aus-
chwitz—Grosswerther—Gunskirchen: A Nine Month’s Od-
yssery through Eight Nazi Concentration Camps,” YVS 28

The main sources referring to the Grosswerther camp are
the records of two war crimes trials: “The Belsen Trial,”
Lüneburg, September 17 to November 17, 1943: evidence of
former female SS guards: Klara Opitz, Ilse Steinbusch, Hil-
degard Kahlbach, and Gertrud Naumann, PRO WO309/1699;
excerpts in Raymond Phillips, ed., Trial of Josef Kramer and
Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial) (London, 1949); and “The
Nordhausen Case,” Dachau, August 7 to December 30, 1947:
Niederschrift der Vernehmung des Johann Demange (former
SS guard), examination of Vira Gombosová [i.e. Vera Gom-
bosová-Oravcová; former inmate (camp clerk)] by Major Fut-
ton C. Vowell, War Crimes Investigating Team #6822, U.S.
Army, April 18, 1945, at Nordhausen; and list of inmates of
the Grosswerther camp, as given by Vera Gombosová-
Oravcová; USA vs. Kurt Andrae et al., NARA Microfilm
Publication M 1079; and the testimonies of Hungarian survivors,
kept in the Magyar Auschwitz Alapítvány—Holocaust Doku-
mentációs Központ (Budapest, n.d.). Other documents as well
as sources referring to the evacuation train, the “Taifun-
Express” from Dora to Fischbach, can be found in the trial
transcripts of the Nordhausen Case, in AG-MD, and in
Nuremberg document PS-2222. Survivor testimonies can
also be found in the Stm.-MöWa.

Joachim Neander

NOTES

1. NARA, M-1079, Examination of Vera Gombosová-
Oravcová, War Crimes Investigating Team #6822, U.S.
Army, April 18, 1945, p. 8.

2. Paul Lauerwald, “Das Aussenlager Grosswerther des

3. Examination of Vera Gombosová-Oravcová, p. 8.

4. Testimony of Helena Halperin (née Helén Blobstein;
former inmate) by Herbert J. Oswald, 1978, Stm.-MöWa.

5. Testimony of Oskar Büschler and Theo Webers, given
before a U.S. commission on April 24, 1945, at Leipzig,
Nuremberg Document PS-2222.

GUT BISCHOFFERODE (“ANNA”)

The history of the “Anna” subcamp at the Gut (Manor)
Bischofferode near Woffleben (not to be confused with the
Bischofferode/Eichsfeld subcamp) is closely connected
with the history of the Ellrich-Juliushütte and Harzungen

projects run by Kammler’s organization, the B-3 project
was never completed.

The Anna camp was close to the B-3a construction site, at
the foot of the Himmelsberg on the Bischofferode Manor.
It was probably established on April 2, 1944. The approximately
300 male prisoners were held, according to surviving Czech
prisoner Rotislav Ministr, in a barn.1 It would appear that the
camp from the beginning was regarded as a temporary camp,
as it was dissolved on May 9, 1944, when the inmates
were transferred to the newly established camp at Ellrich-
Juliushütte.2 The manor’s buildings in Bischofferode from
then on served as the base for Kammler’s SS-Sonderinspektion
II, which coordinated all the Mittelbau construction projects.

At times the prisoners were probably accommodated a few
hundred meters away in the Mittelwerk civilian labor camp.
This camp was located on the north edge of Woffleben and
had not been completed in April 1944. It was intended that
this camp would hold up to 2,500 prisoners while the Har-
zungen camp was being expanded. It is possible that this was
the Anna camp.3

The SS operated the Anna camp together with the Ellrich-
Juliushütte and Harzungen camps as “Arbeitslager B-3.”4 The
three camps had a common SS camp administration, which
initially was headed by 21-year-old SS-Untersturmführer
Hans Ritz. The trained bank officer had been transferred
from the SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA)
in the winter of 1943–1944 to Dora, where he served as adju-
tant to camp commandant Otto Försschner. In September
1944, he was removed as camp leader of the Ellrich-Juliushütte
and Harzungen camps and transferred to the SS-Führerreserve
at Bad Tölz.4

It can be assumed that the temporary camp scarcely dif-
f ered from the horrendous accommodations and sanitary
conditions at the infamous Ellrich-Juliushütte camp.

SOURCES No secondary literature is available that specifi-
cally deals with the Anna camp. The camp is mentioned in
the chronicles of the Ellrich camp by Manfred Bornemann,
Chronik des Lagers Ellrich 1944/45: Ein vergessenes Konzentra-
tionslager wird neu entdeckt (Nordhausen: Landratsamt, 1992);
and in Jens-Christian Wagner’s Mittelbau monograph
Produktion des Todes: Das KZ Mittelbau-Dora (Göttingen:
Wallstein Verlag, 2001).

The establishment and dissolution of the Anna camp is
referred to in the Veränderungsmeldungen des “Kommandos
B 3,” the original of which is held in the ITS (Mittelbau-
Ordner 22). A microfilm copy is held in YVA (Microfilm
BD11-D02). A few additional documents are held in BA-B
and BA-L.

Jens-Christian Wagner
trans. Stephen Pallavicini

NOTES

1. Aussage R. Ministr, April 28, 1967, BStU, ZM 1625,
Bd. 61, p. 219.

2. Veränderungsmeldungen der Lager Bischofferode und
Ellrich, April 2–June 15, 1944, YVA, Microfilm BD11-D02.
versable tunnels were occupied by electronics firms in March 1944, the concentration camp prisoners occupied an unfinished barrack camp in Harzungen that was originally planned as accommodation for 1,000 German Mittelwerk civilian workers. Dora prisoners had been constructing the camp from the autumn of 1943. Once the camp had been surrounded by guards' towers and a 2.5-meter-high (8.2-foot-high) electrified fence, the SS transferred around 4,000 prisoners to the camp. At the beginning of 1945, there were about 5,000 prisoners. At first they worked on the B-3 construction project and later on the B-11 construction site, where they did excavation work for an underground facility in Kohlstein.

In Harzungen, sanitary facilities for bathing and a second toilet block had to be constructed, but overall all the conditions were not so bad when compared to the other Mittelbau camps, especially the infamous Ellrich-Juliushütte camp. The SS also made sure, at least until February 1945, that the number of prisoners in Harzungen did not exceed the camp's capacity.

The relatively good sanitary conditions in Harzungen also meant that the camp was less feared by the prisoners than most of the other construction camps in the Mittelbau concentration camp complex. The Harzungen prisoners, unlike their fellow sufferers in Ellrich, worked in three shifts a day of 8 hours each in the caverns of the B-3 project and not 12 hours a day. The SS construction managers had an obvious interest in preserving the prisoners, who had not yet quite wasted away, unlike in the Ellrich camp, where the prisoners, already very weakened, were literally worked to death.

Finally, the comparatively “humane” Harzungen camp administration had a favorable effect on camp conditions. The camp was initially commanded by SS members Ritz and Eduard Hinckelmann. They were followed for a short time by former Wehrmacht officers, and from the autumn of 1944, the camp was administered by a former Luftwaffe Hauptmann who had been transferred to the SS, SS-Hauptsturmführer Wilhelm Frohne. As Schutzhaftlagerführer he was assisted by a Luftwaffe sergeant who had been transferred to the SS, SS-Oberscharführer Josef Fuchsloch. According to reports by surviving prisoners, they both contributed to an improvement in the camp's conditions.

However, in evaluating prisoners' reports on Frohne and Fuchsloch, there is an important problem to be addressed.

HARZUNGEN ("HANS," "MITTELBAU III")

The history of the “Hans” subcamp in Harzungen, which initially was part of the Buchenwald concentration camp and later the Mittelbau concentration camp, is connected with the history of the camps at Ellrich-Juliushütte and Gut Bischofferode. The three camps were established in April–May 1944 to accommodate concentration camp prisoners who were to work on the nearby construction sites B-3a and B-3b near the villages of Woffl eben and Niedersachswerfen. Work stopped in November 1944. Although the neighboring facility B-3b (code name “Anhydrit- Ost”) was even larger, with an area of 12,000 square meters (14,352 square yards), it was not until the end of July 1944 that the first shaft work began for what was most likely a Ju 224/72, fr. 554.

However, in evaluating prisoners' reports on Frohne and Fuchsloch, there is an important problem to be addressed.

The initials B-3a (code name “Anhydrit”) concealed a plan under which 5 drivable and 30 traversable tunnels would be excavated under the Himmelsberg Mountain. They would be excavated in accordance with the Mittelwerk model and used as a subterranean facility for the Junkers AG. The SS brought the first 40 concentration camp prisoners from the Dora camp to the construction site on March 1, 1944. The numbers rapidly increased after commencement of the preparatory work: by the end of May, just over 3,000 prisoners were working on the B-3a construction site. This number remained constant until the beginning of April 1945. Two almost complete traversable tunnels were occupied by electronics firms in March 1945. They produced the steering mechanisms for the air defense rocket Hs 117. The facility, which was planned to have an area of 10,000 square meters (11,960 square yards), was never completed despite the extensive deployment of prisoner labor.

The neighboring facility B-3b (code name “Anhydrit-Ost”) was even larger, with an area of 12,000 square meters (14,352 square yards). However, it was not until the end of July 1944 that the first shaft work began for what was most likely a Junkers AG underground facility in Mühlberg near Niedersachswerfen. Work stopped in November 1944. Although there were on average 700 prisoners from the Harzungen camp at work when the project ceased, only a few meters had been excavated at the entry into the cavern.

The construction project manager, Wifo (Wirtschaftliche Forschungsgesellschaft mbH, or Economic Research Co., Ltd.), and Junkers AG planned to accommodate the prisoners working on the B-3 project close to the proposed underground factory. This was in accordance with the example set by the Dora camp on the northern edge of the Himmelsberg. A camp for at least 5,000 concentration camp inmates was planned, together with an adjoining SS camp. The plan was soon given up. Instead, the SS established on April 1, 1944, the Harzungen camp and a little later a small provisional camp at the Gut Bischofferode (“Anna”). At the beginning of May 1944, the camp Ellrich-Juliushütte (“Erich”) was established.

The SS referred to the three camps initially as “Arbeitslager B-3.” There was one camp leader for the three camps, SS-Untersturmführer Hans Ritz. In the early summer of 1944, other projects—B-11, B-12, and B-13—were added to the overall plan. As a result, the SS administratively separated the camps and established for each camp its own camp administration. At first the camps were administered from the Buchenwald concentration camp. However, in the summer of 1944, the Dora camp and other camps in the area were combined together as the “SS-Standort Mittelbau,” and two Mittelbau subcamps became known as Mittelbau II (Ellrich) and Mittelbau III (Harzungen).

The concentration camp prisoners occupied an unfinished barrack camp in Harzungen that was originally planned as accommodation for 1,000 German Mittelwerk civilian workers. Dora prisoners had been constructing the camp from the autumn of 1943. Once the camp had been surrounded by guards’ towers and a 2.5-meter-high (8.2-foot-high) electrified fence, the SS transferred around 4,000 prisoners to the camp. At the beginning of 1945, there were about 5,000 prisoners. At first they worked on the B-3 construction project and later on the B-11 construction site, where they did excavation work for an underground facility in Kohlstein.

In Harzungen, sanitary facilities for bathing and a second toilet block had to be constructed, but overall all the conditions were not so bad when compared to the other Mittelbau camps, especially the infamous Ellrich-Juliushütte camp. The SS also made sure, at least until February 1945, that the number of prisoners in Harzungen did not exceed the camp's capacity.

The relatively good sanitary conditions in Harzungen also meant that the camp was less feared by the prisoners than most of the other construction camps in the Mittelbau concentration camp complex. The Harzungen prisoners, unlike their fellow sufferers in Ellrich, worked in three shifts a day of 8 hours each in the caverns of the B-3 project and not 12 hours a day. The SS construction managers had an obvious interest in preserving the prisoners, who had not yet quite wasted away, unlike in the Ellrich camp, where the prisoners, already very weakened, were literally worked to death.

Finally, the comparatively “humane” Harzungen camp administration had a favorable effect on camp conditions. The camp was initially commanded by SS members Ritz and Eduard Hinckelmann. They were followed for a short time by former Wehrmacht officers, and from the autumn of 1944, the camp was administered by a former Luftwaffe Hauptmann who had been transferred to the SS, SS-Hauptsturmführer Wilhelm Frohne. As Schutzhaftlagerführer he was assisted by a Luftwaffe sergeant who had been transferred to the SS, SS-Oberscharführer Josef Fuchsloch. According to reports by surviving prisoners, they both contributed to an improvement in the camp's conditions.

However, in evaluating prisoners' reports on Frohne and Fuchsloch, there is an important problem to be addressed.
Fuchsloch was one of the accused in the Dachau Dora Trial and faced a heavy sentence. During the trial, his defense lawyers named a number of former German and Czech political prisoners as witnesses for the defense, all of whom had held the important prisoner-functionary positions during their time in Harzungen. Their reports, which had obviously been planned with the defense, dominated the trial and the subsequent history of the Harzungen camp. Former prisoner and camp elder Jupp Wortmann played a significant role, speaking out at the trial in defense of Fuchsloch.7

Another choice of witnesses could have put the conditions in the Harzungen camp in a totally different light. Reservations are also justified when the statements of Wortmann’s group are considered. Notwithstanding this, it is correct to say that under Frohnes and Fuchsloch, the treatment of prisoners in Harzungen was essentially better than the feared Mittelbau camps, Ellrich-Julushman and Rottteberode, which were under the command of the SS. This is at least correct for the political prisoners and, among these, for the Germans and Czechs who stood at the apex of the SS racial hierarchy.

The ethnic composition of the exclusively male prisoner population at Harzungen in essence corresponded with the composition of the Mittelbau concentration camp complex. Around 33 percent of all prisoners came from the Soviet Union, 25 percent from Poland, and 12 percent from France. Until February 1945, there was a disproportionately high number of Belgians, more than 18 percent. However, this number declined due to a high number of deaths and transfers in other camps. By the beginning of April 1945, it had been reduced to 6.5 percent. There are features that distinguished the camp from other Mittelbau camps: the number of Roma and Sinti (Gypsies) in Harzungen, 10 percent of the entire camp population, was unusually high. The first large group of Gypsies, around 200 prisoners, was transferred in the middle of April 1944 from Buchenwald to Harzungen. In the middle of May 1944, a second larger Gypsy transport of 600 prisoners was transferred via Buchenwald and Dora to the camp. Just about all of the prisoners from these two transports—including many children and youths—had been held in the Gypsy family camp (Zigeuner-Familienlager) in Birkenau before being transferred via Auschwitz to Buchenwald. There were also a few hundred Hungarian Jews who were transferred from Auschwitz to Buchenwald, before being transferred via Dora to Harzungen in May 1944.

For a long time, the Harzungen camp, with its 4,000 inmates, was not so tightly packed as most of the other Mittelbau camps. This changed at the end of February 1945, when the SS leadership, in the face of the arrival of evacuation transports from Auschwitz and Gross-Rosen, transferred countless sick and dying prisoners from the camps at Mittelbau and Ellrich-Julushman to Harzungen. Not only did the total number of prisoners increase (at the beginning of April 1944, the camp held more than 4,700 prisoners), but so did the death rate. According to SS files, 350 prisoners died in March 1945 in Harzungen alone. Altogether at least 600 prisoners did not survive the camp.

The camp was evacuated on April 4, 1945. The SS took around 4,500 prisoners in two rail transports to Belsen, where they arrived a week later. Another 2,000 inmates were driven by the guards under the command of Frohnes and Fuchsloch by foot through the Harz Mountains to Blankenburg. Here the transport separated into several marching columns, the majority of which headed in the direction of Schönebeck an der Elbe, from where they headed along the Elbe in a southeasterly direction. The Americans liberated many survivors in the area of Schönebeck. The last 1,000 inmates in the Harzungen camp, who after a three-week march arrived in the Czech town of Rabenstein on April 26, were liberated by the Red Army on May 8, 1945.

The Dachau Dora Trial in 1947 included the accused Josef Fuchsloch, a central figure in the Harzungen camp administration. The exculpatory statements by former political prisoners from the camp administration helped in his acquittal. There have been no other proceedings against perpetrators in the Harzungen camp.

There is located in the Harzungen cemetery a grave in which 27 concentration camp prisoners are buried. They were discovered after the U.S. liberation in a grave on the site of the subcamp. Most of these prisoners were from France, Belgium, and Italy. They probably died shortly before the camp’s evacuation as a result of the forced labor and of malnutrition but possibly also because they were killed by the SS as resistance members.


The BA-K (Bestände NS 4 Anhang und R 121, Industriebetigungsgesellschaft) holds documents on the construction projects on which the prisoners were forced to work. The archive also holds the remaining Mittelwerk files and those of the Mittelbau concentration camp. Also in the BA-K are the files of the Wifo (Bestand R 125), which contracted for the construction of the Harzungen camp. A useful source of information is the files of the U.S. Dora Trial in Dachau (NARA, United States of America v. Kurt Andrae, et al.; Microfilm Publication M-1079, 16 Reels. Originals in RG 238, NARA). Prisoners’ reports on the Harzungen camp are mostly held in the AG-MD. The original files of the construction administration for the B-3 construction project are also held here. Other important SS camp files (Stärkemeldungen, Transportlisten, and others) are held in the collections NS 4/Bu in the THHSStA-A and the microfilms BD3-Bu 19 to 44 and BD11-Do 1 to 6 in YVA (they are files microfilmed from ITS, which until recently was closed to researchers). A member of the Luftwaffe who had been transferred to the SS and was a guard at Harzungen published his memoirs after
the war. They were published after his death and give a detailed account of daily life in the camp from a guard’s perspective. See Willy Mirbach, “Damit du es später deinem Sohn einmal erzählen kannst...” Der autobiographische Bericht eines Luftzugsoldaten aus dem KZ Mittelbau (August 1944–Juli 1945), ed. Gerd Halmann (Geldern: Verlag des Historischen Vereins für Geldern und Umgegend, 1997).

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NOTES


2. Ibid.; as well as Arbeitseinsatzmeldungen KZ Buchenwald, 1944/45, THStA-N, NS 4 Bu/230.


4. For the planning and cessation of work on project B-3b, see Protokoll einer Besprechung bei der Wifo Niedersachsenwerfen on April 21, 1944, AG-MD, 50.1.2.1; Schreiben Zentral-Arbeitseinsatz Mittelbau an Arbeitseinsatzführer Buchenwald, July 28, 1944, ITS, Sachdokumenten-Ordner Buchenwald 45, S. 263; Arge Wofflhein, Baubericht 1944, February 20, 1945, AG-MD, 50.1.2.1, sowie KZ Buchenwald, Arbeitseinsatz-Bericht B 3b, Oktober 1944, ITS, Sachdokumenten-Ordner Buchenwald 54, p. 168.

5. Aktenvermerk Wifo Niedersachsenwerfen bez. Lager Harzungen, October 2, 1944, BA-B, R 125/241; as well as ITS-Material, AG-MD, 1.4.3./3.

6. Numerous former prisoners testified in favor of both camp leaders in the Dachau Dora Trial in 1947: Ludwig Schiller is representative of those prisoners.


8. Stärkemeldungen der Einzellager des KZ Mittelbau, November 1, 1944, and April 1, 1945, AG-MD, 1.4.3./3.


ILFELD

There are sparse details on the short history of the Ilfeld camp. According to the existing SS files, the camp was established on January 9, 1945, when 4 prisoners were transferred from the Mittelbau main camp. By the end of March 1945, as a result of further transfers, the numbers had increased to more than 260. According to an SS guard, there were between 350 and 400 prisoners in the camp. Concentration camp prisoners were part of daily life from the autumn of 1943 onward for the citizens of Ilfeld. About 100 prisoners from the Dora camp, about eight kilometers (five miles) away, constructed a barracks camp on the so-called Schafswiese (sheep’s field) between October 1943 and the spring of 1944. The work was done for the Wifo (Wirtschaftliche Forschungsgesellschaft mbH, Economic Research Co., Ltd.) construction management firm in Niedersachsenwerfen. The Schafswiese was an unimproved parcel of land in the center of the village of 2,000 inhabitants. The barracks camp was initially for accommodation for around 450 Wehrmacht soldiers and another 450 German laborers and technicians who worked for the Mittelwerk GmbH. After a prisoner detachment from the Dora camp had put a barbed-wire fence around the camp, the German inmates of the community camp (Gemeinschaftslager) were replaced by foreign forced laborers, who worked in the “Nordwerk” in Kohnstein, where they assembled aircraft engines for the Junkers company.

During the course of 1944, other prisoner detachments from the camps at Dora and Harzungen were forced to expand the Mittelwerk infrastructure in several locations in Ilfeld, including the laying of water pipes in the main street (Adolf-Hitler-Allee), the construction of air-raid shelters on the eastern edge of the village (Herzberg), and the construction of a waterworks (Kommando Rosensteg). There were to be other labor detachments, especially in Mittelwerk’s tailor shop based in the Ilfeld Kloster school, which since the autumn of 1943 had been the seat of the Mittelwerk GmbH administration, and the Günther paper mill, where prisoners worked for the Mittelwerk in establishing an assembly hall for the “Volksjäger” (People’s Fighter) He 162.

Initially, the prisoner detachments working in Ilfeld marched daily from the Dora and Harzungen camps to their work sites. Later, they were transported on the Harz narrow gauge railway. However, because of the fuel shortage and the constant Allied air attacks, there were more and more disruptions to the train service in the winter of 1944–1945. For this reason, the SS established at the beginning of January a subcamp in Ilfeld, where all the prisoners from the various work detachments were gradually transferred.

The location of the subcamp cannot be exactly determined. The witness statements contradict each other. Several reports state that the prisoners were accommodated in part of the barracks on the Schafswiese. What is more likely is that the camp was located above the paper mill in an empty two-story storehouse of the former hotel Talbrauerei. The prisoners were housed on the first floor, while the guards’ accommodation was on the ground floor. At the beginning of the 1940s, foreign forced laborers had been held here, and they were transferred to other camps before the concentration camp prisoners were transferred here.

Compared to other Mittelbau camps, the number of Jewish prisoners in Ilfeld was comparatively high. At the end of March 1945, there were around 60 Hungarian and Polish Jews in the camp. There were large groups of non-Jewish prisoners from the Soviet Union, Poland, and France. In all probability, the living and working conditions were no different from the catastrophic conditions in the other Mittelbau camps.

There are hardly any survivors’ reports because the camp’s inmates were the victims of the massacres that occurred dur-
In the county of Salzwedel. The SS shot others in the vicinity of camp. This transport ended for many Ilfeld prisoners in the Gardelegen massacre. The SS shot others in the vicinity of Estedt and Jävenitz in the county of Salzwedel.

At the end of March 1945, there were around 30 members of the guard. For the few weeks prior to the dissolution of the camp, they were under the command of 47-year-old SS-Unterscharführer Werner Wachholz. He had been transferred in the summer of 1944 from the Wehrmacht to the SS. Wachholz commanded some of the guards from December 1944 to March 21, 1945, in the “Dachs IV” subcamp near Osterode in the Harz. Wachholz was questioned as a witness in the middle of the 1960s during a trial regarding the death of prisoners in the Dachs IV camp. He himself was never charged. It would seem that all the other members of the guard in Ilfeld were never tried.

**SOURCES**

Manfred Bornemann from Ilfeld, in addition to his study on the Mittelbau concentration camp, *Geheimprojekt Mittelbau. Vom zentralen Öllager des Deutschen Reiches zur grössten Raketenfabrik im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Bonn, 1994), has put together two works that deal explicitly with the war and Ilfeld: *Ilfeld 1940–1950: Beiträge zu einem Jahrzehnt Heimatgeschichte* (Hamburg, 1984); and “Zwanzig Tage im April: Die Kriegserignisse bei Ilfeld vor 50 Jahren—eine Chronik,” *BHSKN* 20 (1995): 107–130, which have sections that deal with the subcamp. Bornemann’s work is based on his own experiences and witness reports.

An Ilfeld Transport- und Arbeitskommando list, dated March 25, 1945, is held in the Mittelbau-Ordner 18 of the ITS (a copy is held in YVA, Microfilm BD11-Do2). References to the prisoner transport to the Ilfeld subcamp are to be found in the Veränderungsmeldungen des KZ Mittelbau (THStA-W, KZ Buchenwald u. Hafta Nr. Dora Dok./K 395). The Ilfeld A/245 file in the AKr-N contains correspondence on the Schafswiese camp in Ilfeld from the years 1943 to 1945. The record of interview of the former SS camp leader Werner Wachhold is contained in the files of the trial against Gerhard Herdel, who replaced Wachhold as commander of the Dachs IV camp in Osterode before he was transferred to Ilfeld (Statements W. Wachholz, April 28, 1965, BA-L, 429 AR-Z 241/72, Bl. 4 ff., u. 16.8.1965, NHStA-H, Nds 721 Gö Acc. 99/81, Nr. 41, p. 24).

**NOTE**

According to witnesses, a prisoner detachment was dispatched at first daily from the Rottleberode camp to work in Kelbra. On November 2, 1944, the SS established its own subcamp in the city. Eventually, around 60 mostly Soviet and Polish inmates from the Mittelbau main camp and Rossla subcamp would be transferred to Kelbra. Finally, it should be mentioned that the Rossla camp was administratively responsible to the newly established Kelbra camp.

The prisoners were accommodated in the so-called Sängershalle, a hotel with an assembly hall and dance room, about a kilometer (0.6 miles) from the brewery’s cellars, where the prisoners worked. The dayrooms and the sleeping rooms for the prisoners were on the ground floor of the building. The hastily erected washing facilities and toilets were located in the fenced-in rear courtyard. The windows were covered with barbed wire, and at both doors stood armed guards.

The guards were also accommodated in the Sängershalle in a separate room. There were around 15 Wehrmacht and SS members under the command of SS-Unterscharführer Walter Christoph. They guarded the prisoners while they were in their quarters and on the way to work. At work, German technicians and civilian employees of the Mittelwerk GmbH trained while the Kapos supervised their work.

Food for the prisoners and the guards was delivered from the Mittelbau main camp and prepared by the cooks in the Sängershalle. Because the food was for prisoners who had to work on the production line, it was not as bad as in other camps where the prisoners had to work on construction sites. The improvised sanitary conditions in the former hotel were also not as bad as those in other Mittelbau camps, and the prisoners’ survival chances were higher. It is thought that one prisoner died of malnutrition during the four months of the camp’s existence.

As with most of the other Mittelbau camps, the SS evacuated the Sängershalle at the beginning of April 1945 when U.S. forces approached from the west. Shortly before the evacuation, on the night of April 4–5, 1945, four Soviet prisoners managed to escape from the camp. On the morning of April 5, 1945, the camp leader Christoph gave the order to evacuate the camp. The prisoners were driven by the guards in a daylong march across the Harz Mountains to Blankenburg and from there to Wittenberge an der Elbe. Exhausted prisoners were shot or beaten to death by the guards. After they crossed the Elbe River, Christoph directed the march in a northerly direction to avoid the approaching Soviet troops. The Kelbra death march ended in the middle of April 1945 in the Wöbbelin subcamp in Mecklenburg, where the survivors were liberated by U.S. troops on May 2.

Christoph had to answer for the murders committed on the death march before a West German court in Krefeld in 1976. He was acquitted due to a lack of evidence. There were no other trials connected with the Kelbra subcamp.

**SOURCES** There is no single work devoted to the Kelbra camp. The camp is referred to in a work by Frank Baranowski, *Die verdrängte Vergangenheit: Rüstungsproduktion und Zwangsarbeit in Nordthüringen* (Duderstadt, 2000); and in an older doctoral dissertation by Brigitte Müller, Eva-Maria Proske, and Günther Weick, a chapter in “Die Aussenkommandos des KZ Buchenwald im Bezirk Halle” (Ph. D. diss., University of Halle-Wittenberg, 1979), pp. 72–91: “Das ehemalige Aussenkommando des KZ Buchenwald in Kelbra.” However, the value of the latter is limited due to numerous factual errors (beginning with the title because the Kelbra camp was never part of the Buchenwald concentration camp).

The Mittelbau concentration camp Veränderungsmeldungen (THStA-W, KZ Buchenwald u. Hafta Nr. Dora Dok./K 395) allow the reconstruction of the prisoner transports to and from Kelbra. There are no known prisoner reports on Kelbra. The only known eyewitness report is that of a German who lived in the area from 1997, which is located in the AG-MD (Zeitzeugenbefragungsprojekt, Bericht 42: Bericht Fritz Rössler). The verdict in the proceedings against Walter Christoph is to be published in a new publication: (Justiz und NS-Verbrechen. Sammlung deutscher Strafurteile wegen nationalsozialistischer Tötungsverbrechen, ed. of C.F. Rüter: Verfahren Nr. 837).

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**NOTE**


**KLEINBODUNGEN (“EMMI”) [AKA WERK III]**

The production areas in the underground Mittelwerk factory at Kohnstein were inadequate by far. As a result, the Mittelwerk managers established a branch factory in June 1944 in an unused potash factory in Kleinbodungen, about 15 kilometers (9.3 miles) west of Nordhausen. Defective rockets were stored and repaired in Kleinbodungen. At the beginning of October 1944, the repair factory, known as “Werk III,” commenced operations. A little later the branch factory established its own branches in Bischofferode and Niedergebrub, where individual parts of the A4 (Aggregat 4) rockets were stored.

The SS and works’ administration used concentration camp prisoners in expanding the repair works. Initially, a subcamp was not established. Instead, from June 1944 the SS transported to Kleinbodungen up to 140 prisoners daily by truck from the Ellrich-Julushütte camp. It was only after the repair works began operations that the SS established on the factory grounds a Mittelbau subcamp, which had the code name “Emmi.” It was not for the prisoners from Ellrich—they had to work on other construction sites—but for 510 inmates from the Mittelbau main camp, who arrived on October 3, 1944, in Kleinbodungen. Until their arrival at Kleinbodungen, they had been working at the Zeppelin factory in Friedrichshafen on Lake Constance, from where they were deported to the South Harz Mountains.

The prisoners had worked on the assembly of rockets at the Zeppelin factory. As skilled workers who could not be
easily replaced, the SS and works' administration in Kleinbodungen took care to ensure that their strength was preserved as much as possible. The reports by former prisoners state that the work and living conditions in the camp were markedly better than in most of the other Mittelbau camps. That the racial hierarchy of prisoner groups and the economic aims of forced labor often went hand in hand is shown by the ethnic composition of the prisoners in Kleinbodungen: German prisoners constituted more than 21 percent of the camp inmates—this included political as well as "criminal" prisoners—a percentage that was much higher than in other Mittelbau camps. Even higher were the proportions of Polish and Soviet prisoners—they each constituted about a third of the inmates. The remaining prisoners came from France, Czechoslovakia, and other German-occupied countries. Most of the foreign prisoners wore the red triangle of political prisoners. Two Hungarian inmates were classified as Jews.1

The approximately 650 prisoners in the camp were accommodated in two three-story buildings in the former potash factory, which were surrounded with an electrified barbed-wire fence. On the ground floor of both buildings there were sanitary facilities and the dayrooms. The prisoners' sleeping dormitories were on the two upper floors. The rocket repair factory was located in one of the two buildings, which was connected to the German railway. The proximity of the accommodation to the work sites may be another ground for the comparatively bearable prison conditions in Kleinbodungen, as in other camps the prisoners usually had a long and exhausting march to work.

Around 50 SS members, including many so-called Volkdeutsche, guarded the camp. The camp leader was SS-Hauptscharführer Franz Stärf, who was born in 1915. His deputy was SS-Oberscharführer Wilhelm Dörr (born 1921).

The SS evacuated the camp on April 4, 1945. Driven on by the guards, the camp's inmates marched via Herzberg, Seesen, and Salzgitter to the Bergen-Belsen barracks camp. They arrived there on April 11. Of the original 610 prisoners who started out on the march, there were only around 570 alive when they reached Bergen-Belsen at midday on April 11. A few days later, on April 15-16, the survivors were liberated by British soldiers.

The camp leader Stärf and his deputy Dörr were soon taken into British custody. They were both sentenced to death during the British Bergen-Belsen Trial, which took place in the autumn of 1945, for the crimes they committed in Kleinbodungen and on the death march to Bergen-Belsen. On December 13, 1945, they were hanged in Hameln. A third person accused, a member of the Kleinbodungen guards, SS member George Kraft, was acquitted by the court. During the 1960s, the West German state prosecutors conducted a number of investigations into former members of the SS guards at the Kleinbodungen camp. Each investigation ceased without any further action. However, in the German Democratic Republic in 1962 the Gera District Court (Bezirksgericht) convicted the former camp elder, Max Lell, who had been a "criminal" prisoner in the concentration camp. He was sentenced to eight years in prison.

After the Americans occupied Kleinbodungen on April 10, 1945, they removed the rockets that had been left behind by the Germans. After their withdrawal, the Soviet Army in the summer of 1945 established a branch of the "Zentralwerk" on the site. German engineers under Soviet supervision rebuilt the V-2 rockets, whose blueprints had been taken by the Americans into the Western occupation zone or to the United States. In the autumn of 1946, the Soviet military relinquished the site and took its material and personnel to the Soviet Union.

**NOTES**


3. Ibid.
KLEINBODUngen/Bischofferode-Eichsfeld

Established at the beginning of November 1944, the Bischofferode-Eichsfeld subcamp was about 20 kilometers (12.4 miles) to the west of the Mittelbau main camp, on the Bischofferode manor near Woffl eben. It should not be confused with the Woffl eben subcamp. There were about 60 inmates who were probably held in a tent camp close to the Bischofferode railway station and worked in a Mittelwerk factory that used forced laborers. The factory stored defective A4 (Aggregat 4) rockets and repaired them (“Kommando 48a”).

The branch factory in Bischofferode was part of the Mittelwerk “Werk III,” which was based in Kleinbodungen about 7 kilometers (4.3 miles) away. Mirroring the company structure, the Bischofferode subcamp was a subcamp of the Kleinbodungen subcamp (also known as “Emmi”), which in turn was controlled by the Mittelbau main camp.

It is possible that the Bischofferode prisoners were forced to work not only in the above-mentioned Mittelwerk branch factory but also in a stores depot of the SS-Sonderinspektion II, which was established in the autumn of 1944 on the grounds of the nearby Wintershall AG potash factory. The Elektromechanische Werke Karlshagen, which specialized in the development of rockets, had been evacuated from Peenemünde at the beginning of March 1945. It had a weapons depot and assembly-line facilities in Bischofferode. It is possible that the prisoners from the local concentration camp worked there.

The few surviving sources provide no details on whether there were any deaths in Bischofferode. The Mittelbau concentration camp files refer to the camp for the last time on March 23, 1945. Its inmates were probably evacuated on April 4, 1945, with other prisoners from the Emmi camp in Kleinbodungen in the direction of Bergen-Belsen.

There were no postwar trials involving Bischofferode-Eichsfeld personnel.


The most important source for prisoner transports to and from the camp are the Mittelbau concentration camp Veränderungmeldungen (THSta-A, KZ Buchenwald u. Hafta Nr. Dora Dok./K 395). The camp’s prisoner lists are held in ITS (Mittelbau-Ordner 20); and as microfilm copies in YVA (Microfilm BD11-Do2).

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KLEINBODUngen/Niedergebra (“Kommando 48a”)

From the beginning of November 1944, around 40 Polish, Soviet, and Dutch concentration camp prisoners were held in a forced labor camp on the site of the Fiesel factory, which had been relocated to Kassel. The SS files name the camp as “Kommando 48a.” It was administered by the Kleinbodungen camp, which repaired defective A4 (Aggregat 4) rockets. It is therefore likely that the inmates were used to maintain and repair stored A4 rocket parts for the Mittelwerk GmbH. On the other hand, Frank Baranowski suspects that the prisoners were forced to work on the Fiesel factory’s aircraft production line.

It is possible that the Niedergebra prisoners, together with the inmates of the Kleinbodungen camp, were sent on the evacuation march on April 5, 1945, in the direction of Bergen-Belsen.

SOURCES The Niedergebra subcamp is scarcely mentioned in the literature. It is only Frank Baranowski, Die verdrängte Vergangenheit: Rüstungsproduktion und Zwangsarbeit in Nordthüringen (Duderstadt: Mecke Druck und Verlag, 2000), p. 116, who devotes a few lines to the camp.

The Niedergebra subcamp is mentioned in lists of work detachments of the Kleinbodungen subcamp file (Kommando “Emmi”), which are held in ITS. Microfilmed copies of these documents are held in YVA (Microfilm BD11-Do2).

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NOTE


Nordhausen (Boelcke-Kaserne)

American soldiers made a gruesome discovery when they entered the Thüringen city of Nordhausen on April 11, 1945. In the ruins of the Luftwaffe barracks, destroyed during a British air raid, they found the corpses of more than 1,000 emaciated concentration camp prisoners and forced laborers. A few hundred lay dying among the corpses. For these people, help had come too late. In the following weeks and months the photographs and film that were taken in the courtyard of the barracks of the dead laid out in rows (they included many young children and babies) went around the world. In many places they became the defining image of National Socialist camp terror.

The barracks (Kaserne) in which the dead were found was named after a fighter pilot, Oswald Boelcke. The dead came from a number of forced labor camps and prison camps that had been established on the barracks grounds during the last year of the war. The Boelcke-Kaserne showed in microcosm the varied hierarchy of the National Socialist camp system: SS labor camps (Arbeitslager) directly adjoined Gestapo special camps (Sonderlager) and forced labor camps for local industry and relocated industries. Altogether, there were at the beginning of 1945 more than 10,000 forced laborers and prisoners of various categories held on the expansive barracks grounds. The gruesome kernel of this National Socialist camp system was the Mittelbau subcamp, a death zone.

Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945
The Boelcke-Kaserne subcamp was established on January 8, 1945 and lasted for only three months. It was originally planned as a collection camp (Sammelager) for prisoner detachments, which had to work on the B-11 construction site near Niedersachswerfen and in more that 20 Nordhausen factories. They had been previously held in the Mittelbau main camp. From the end of January 1945, countless transports with exhausted, sick, and dead concentration camp prisoners arrived from the dissolved Auschwitz and Gross-Rosen concentration camps in the South Harz Mountains. At the same time the number of sick in the Mittelbau camps dramatically increased. As a result, the SS administration changed the function of the camp to become the central Mittelbau camp for the sick and the dying. In the middle of February 1945, more than 3,500 totally exhausted and emaciated prisoners arrived from the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. With this arrival, increasingly large numbers of inmates could not be used for labor, even according to SS standards. In the end, the camp held thousands of dying prisoners who were provided no amenities. Dozens died daily, and toward the end, they died in the hundreds.

The “accommodation” in the Boelcke-Kaserne was, even according to concentration camp standards, completely inadequate. It consisted of two long two-story garages on the northern edge of the barracks area, which were bordered by an electrified fence. The first garage held Blocks 1 to 4 and the kitchen. The prisoners who could “work” were held here in comparatively bearable conditions, at least when compared to the conditions in the second garage. The second garage, isolated from the rest of the camp by a second barbed-wire fence, was the location for the infamous Blocks 6 and 7 on the ground floor. They held the ill and the dying. The first floor held the infirmary and Block 5, which from March 1945 became the central infirmary for those prisoners from the main camp and other Mittelbau subcamps who were suffering from tuberculosis. Death occurred by organized neglect. Those classified as incapable of working were regarded as useless and were allowed to die.

It is difficult to describe in words the conditions in this building. At times the SS forced more than 3,000 dying prisoners into Blocks 6 and 7, which together had an area of not even 1,800 square meters (2,153 square yards). There were no beds in these blocks. Instead, the prisoners were forced to lie one next to the other on the concrete floor on which there was a thin layer of sawdust. There was a toilet area, but it could not be used because there was no water. In any event, many of the weakened prisoners, because of their condition, would not have been able to get to the toilets. The dying lay on the concrete floor. Every now and then, they would be hosed down to clean them from the worst of the human excrement.

According to the SS files, 1,662 prisoners died in this camp between January 8 and April 2, 1945. An additional unknown number of deaths must be added to this official record as well as the 2,250 sick and dying prisoners who were transferred from Bergen-Belsen to the Boelcke-Kaserne around March 8, 1945.

The Boelcke-Kaserne subcamp had the largest proportion of Jewish prisoners in the Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp system. The reason for this was because a large number of exhausted Jewish prisoners arrived in Mittelbau in January 1945 from Gross-Rosen and Auschwitz. The exception to this was the Gross-Werther camp, which held only Jewish women. However, while there are no exact numbers, it can be assumed that the large majority of Polish prisoners, who from April 1, 1945, accounted for more than 40 percent of the total numbers in the camp, were Jews. There were also relatively large numbers of Russian and French prisoners as well as Hungarian Jews.

As the camp only lasted for three months, the survivors were able to report little on the behavior of the SS camp administration. The camp leader was 50-year-old SS-Obersturmführer Heinrich Josten, who had arrived in Nordhausen from Auschwitz. His deputy was SS-Hauptscharführer Josef Kestel, who had been the Rapportführer in the Dora main camp. Both men do not figure in survivors’ memoirs, which is hardly surprising, as the SS scarcely entered the camp. This also applied to SS-Obersturmführer Dr. Heinrich Schmidt, who was the camp doctor for a few weeks. His presence is most noted for his inactivity. The catastrophic conditions in the Boelcke-Kaserne subcamp can largely be attributed to him. The SS installed mostly German prisoners as prisoner-functionaries in Boelcke-Kaserne. They wore the green triangle of the “criminals.” Their appointment worsened the conditions in the camp.

There were around 5,700 inmates in the camp on April 1, 1945. The camp’s dissolution began on April 2–3, 1945, when around 3,000 prisoners were transferred to the camps at Mittelbau and Ellrich-Juliusöhette. British bomber squadrons attacked Nordhausen on the afternoon of April 3 and on the following day. The garages in Boelcke-Kaserne were heavily damaged. Although a prisoner infirmary, it had not been
marked with a Red Cross symbol. The garage that held Blocks 6 and 7 suffered heavy damage and was almost completely destroyed. The guards had sought refuge in the air-raid shelters, but the prisoners were left where they were to the mercy of the bombs. On April 3, there were 450 dead during the first attack in the afternoon in the block for those suffering from tuberculosis. The SS evacuated Nordhausen after the air raid, leaving the survivors behind, most of whom were more dead than alive. Hundreds lay dying in the rubble in the garages; no one cared for them. Some prisoners had managed to escape during the air raids, hiding in the rubble of Nordhausen and the nearby forests until they were liberated by the Americans on April 11, 1945.

The Americans immediately established a hospital after they entered Nordhausen. They brought in additional medical units, who treated the sick and injured in the barracks. For more than 1,300 prisoners, this help came too late. Many of those who survived the air raids died in the days that followed from starvation and exhaustion. On April 16, 1945, five days after liberation, the U.S. military administration had the Nordhausen local population bury the corpses from Boelcke-Kaserne, including women and children, in the city's main cemetery.

At the same time, the U.S. Army began investigations into those responsible for the crimes committed in the Mittelbau concentration camp. The former camp doctor, Dr. Schmidt, was tried in the 1947 Dachau Dora Trial, as was one other SS member from Boelcke-Kaserne. Schmidt was acquitted for lack of evidence. Likewise, he was acquitted for lack of evidence in the 1979 Majdanek Trial in Düsseldorf. There were no other trials regarding crimes committed in the Boelcke-Kaserne subcamp.

**Sources**


The most important sources on the prisoner transports to Boelcke-Kaserne are the camp administration’s Veränderungsmeldungen as well as individual MIT StA Transportsliste and Häftlingsaufstellungen. However, they are incomplete and held in various archives (including ITS: Mittelbau-Ordner und Sachdokumentenarchiv; THStA-W: Bestände “NS 4 Bu” und “KZ und Haftanstalten Buchenwald”; YVA: Microfilms BD3-Bu4–BD3-Bu4+ and BD11-Dol–BD11-Dol). An important source is the files from the U.S. military trial against those responsible for the Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp that took place in Dachau in 1947 (NARA: United States of America vs. Kurt Andreae, et al., Microfilm Publication M-1079, 16 Reels; originals in RG 238, NARA). Several survivors after the war wrote about their imprisonment in National Socialist concentration camps. The Boelcke-Kaserne is referred to in only a few passages in these accounts. See Léon-E. Halkin, À l’ombre de la mort (Brussels: Pauli, 1965), p. 168; Emile Samyn, Mijn naam was een nummer (Izegem: Uitgeverij Hochepiël, 1995), pp. 95–109; and Jules Hofstein, “D’évacuation à évacuation,” in De l’Université aux Camps de Concentration. Témoignages Strasbourgais (Paris, 1947), pp. 511–518.

**Notes**


2. NARA, M-1079, Roll 11, p. 627, Prosecution Exhibit P-81A.


4. Übersicht über die Zusammensetzung der Lagerbeleg- schaften in den Lagern des KZ Mittelbau, April 1, 1945, AG-MD, 1.4.3./3 (files from ITS).


OSTERODE-FREIHEIT
(FIRMA CURT HEBER)

The suburb of Freiheit in the Harz district city of Osterode was the site of a subcamp for the company Curt Heber. In retrospect, in many ways it represents a unique type of Mittelbau subcamp. It was, for a start, around 50 kilometers (31 miles) away from the Mittelbau main camp, outside the core area of the Mittelbau camps. On the other hand, its inmates did not have to work on construction sites but in a working factory that had nothing to do with the production of rockets for the Mittelwerk. The most important products produced by the Heber company were bomb-release devices. A section of the company from 1944 was working on the development of a cannon for fighter aircraft, including the jet fighter Messerschmitt (Me) 262, whose engines were produced in Nordwerk, which was not far from the Mittelwerk. The development of this weapon and the fact that the head of the company, Curt Heber, had close connections to the Reich Air Ministry could have led to the establishment of a Mittelbau camp.

September 25, 1944, is regarded as the date the camp was established. On this day, 10 prisoners from Buchenwald were sent as an advance detachment to Osterode. In October, another 300 prisoners from the Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen concentration camps arrived in Osterode. In order to accommodate the prisoners, the company’s management cleared four wooden barracks on the factory’s grounds, which had been a forced labor camp, and fenced them in with barbed wire. A fifth barrack served as accommodation for the guards.

Initially, the camp was administered from Buchenwald. At the end of October 1944, it was transferred to the newly established Mittelbau concentration camp. However, by all accounts, the transfer to Mittelbau was purely of a formal nature. The Osterode-Freiheit subcamp did not develop close connections with the Mittelbau main camp or the Mittelbau “Dachs IV” subcamp in Osterode-Petershütte, which was only a few kilometers away. In December 1944 and January 1945, members of the Heber company inspected concentration camp prisoners in Buchenwald who were to be sent directly to Osterode. It was only at the end of February 1945 that the first prisoners from the Mittelbau main camp were transferred to Osterode. As a result, the number of prisoners increased to more than 400, of whom more than half came from Poland. The prisoners were production prisoners (Produktionsschäftlinge). If they were unable to work, this would mean economic loss for the Heber company. As a result, the prisoners in the Osterode-Freiheit camp were exposed to less arduous working conditions than were to be found in the numerous Mittelbau-Dora construction camps. Work in a production detachment also offered a certain degree of protection from the terror and mistreatment. Nevertheless, an unknown number of prisoners died, especially in the last few months of the camp’s existence. Most of the dead were cremated in the Mittelbau crematorium, but a few were buried in the Osterode cemetery.

At first the subcamp was commanded by a Wehrmacht noncommissioned officer who had been transferred to the SS. Survivors later stated that he treated the prisoners acceptably. In January 1945, he was replaced by SS-Hauptsharführer Karl Petz (the correct spelling of the name is not certain), who treated the prisoners in an extraordinarily brutal way. The prisoners nicknamed the 25-year-old the “Tiger.” He personally beat the prisoners and encouraged his subordinates and Kapos to do the same.

The terror introduced to the camp by the new SS camp leader and the declining rations increased the rate of illness among the camp inmates from January 1945. In March 1945, more than 70 debilitated prisoners were sent to the main camp and the death camp in the Nordhausen Boelcke-Kaserne. The dissolution of the Osterode-Freiheit camp followed on April 5, 1945, when the prisoners were driven by their guards along the western edge of the Harz in a northerly direction. After four days of marching, the survivors of the death march were separated into several groups in Gifhorn and were marched in a northerly and easterly direction. Most of the survivors were liberated by the Americans between April 9 and 13, in the area between Gifhorn and Salzdolwad.


Details on the prisoner transports to and from Osterode can be obtained from the almost complete Stärkemeldungen and Transportlisten, which are held in ITS (copies are held in the YVA, Microfilm BD3-Bu20) and in the THStA-W (Bestand NS 4 Bu). The BA-L holds the files from the investigation conducted in 1972 by the ZdL into former guards from the Osterode-Freiheit camp (Bestand IV 429 AR-Z 241/72). Transport lists for this camp were published in BADRDE 6–7 (June–July 1946): 23.

NOTES
1. ITS, Buchenwald-Ordner 295 (YVA, Microfilm BD3-Bu-43).

Jens-Christian Wagner
trans. Stephen Pallavicini
The subcamp "Dachs IV," which was established rather late, was in some ways different from the other camps and construction sites in the Mittelbau-Dora complex: it lay outside the core geographical area of the concentration camp complex (the camp was located around 50 kilometers [31 miles] to the northwest of the main camp). Its inmates did not have to excavate underground facilities for the Junkers company, as was mostly the case in other Mittelbau concentration camp construction projects. Instead, they were to excavate an underground oil refinery for the Hamburg oil company Rhenania-Ossag. It was for this reason that the construction of a subterranean Dachs IV project was commenced. Very few prisoners transferred to the Mittelbau concentration camp. At the beginning of March 1945, the number in Dachs IV had increased to around 800 inmates.1

1. The camp consisted of six makeshift barracks and was surrounded by a high barbed-wire fence. It was severely overcrowded. Hunger and poor sanitary conditions accelerated the prisoners’ loss of strength as they undertook forced labor in the caves. Emaciated prisoners and those no longer capable of working were regularly transferred to the main camp infirmary and later to the camp for the dying in the Nordhausen Boelcke-Kaserne.

There was one thing above all that distinguished this camp from other Mittelbau camps: the SS did not evacuate the camp at the beginning of April 1945 but on March 21, when its inmates were transferred to the Nordhausen Boelcke-Kaserne. The evacuated subcamp was then for a short time occupied by 1,000 Soviet POWs who continued the work on the subterranean Dachs IV project. Very few prisoners transferred to the Boelcke-Kaserne are likely to have survived.

SS-Oberscharführer Werner Wachholz (born 1898), who had been transferred from the Wehrmacht, was in command of the camp. The prisoners have described him as "correct" in his command. The camp regime, however, dramatically worsened when Wachholz was replaced in February 1945 by SS-Hauptscharführer Gerhard Herdel.2 Wachholz remained in command of the 70-man-strong guards, who were also Wehrmacht members who had been transferred to the SS. The camp command was now under the control of the 34-year-old Herdel who had previously occupied the posts of deputy Arbeitsleitsmann and Rapportführer in the Auschwitz III-Monowitz concentration camp and was apparently well adapted to his role. He was sentenced in 1953 to one year's
imprisonment by a jury court in Göttingen for crimes committed in Auschwitz and Osterode. He did not have to serve time, however.¹ It would seem there were no other criminal proceedings relating to criminal acts committed in the Dachs IV camp.


Details on prisoner transports between the Dachs IV subcamp and the main camps at Buchenwald and Mittelbau are to be found in the transport lists compiled by the administration in the Buchenwald concentration camp (ITS, Buchenwald-Ordner 165), as well as the Mittelbau Stärkemeldungen (THStA-W, KZ Buchenwald u. Hafta Nr. Dora Dok./K 395). The ZdL (today BA-L) holds the investigation files into the proceedings relating to criminal acts committed in the Dachs IV camp. Gregorio Pialli, a concentration camp survivor, has written the only known report by a survivor of the camp. He was transferred from the main camp to Quedlinburg in the late summer of 1944.¹ According to Pialli, the prisoners were at first shifted from one building to another in the city. Later, a camp was established in a dilapidated building on the edge of the city, which was fenced in with barbed wire.

The prisoners, as with the inmates of the Trautenstein subcamp, which also exclusively held IMIs, worked in Quedlinburg on the construction of the planned high-voltage power line at Frose-Bleicherode, which was to provide additional electricity to the Mittelwerk industrial complex near Niedersachsen in the northeast Harz region.

According to a set of directions from the Mittelbau main camp labor administration office, the IMIs were allowed to work without guards from the summer of 1944.¹ It is probably for this reason that the Quedlinburg and Trautenstein camps, whose prisoners worked solely on the construction of the high-voltage power line, were occupied by Italian military internees. In this way, the SS could spare the use of guards. There was no construction work done in January and February 1945 due to severe frost. During this period, the prisoners cleared away the snow.

Concerning deaths at Quedlinburg, what is known is that Giovanni Tomei probably died after being sent back to the main camp.

As with the other Mittelbau camps that held only IMIs, the Quedlinburg camp was not evacuated at the beginning of April 1945 when the Americans approached. Pialli stated that the prisoners were still cleaning up rubble in the streets of Quedlinburg following an air raid on April 11, 1945. The following night, the SS guards disappeared. Fearing attacks, he and his fellow prisoners approached the Americans only on April 14. With that, the Quedlinburg camp was closed.

**NOTES**

1. KZ Buchenwald, Transportliste Dachs IV, November 20, 1944, ITS, Buchenwald-Ordner 165 (VVA, Microfilm BD3-Bu20), as well as Veränderungs meldungen Mittelbau-Dora, 1944/45, THStA-W, KZ Buchenwald u. Hafta Nr. Dora Dok./K 395.


**QUEDLINBURG**

One of five Mittelbau subcamps that held only Italian military internees (IMIs) was located in Quedlinburg. The district city in the northern Harz plain was well-known during the National Socialist regime for its Gothic cathedral, which Heinrich Himmler wished to convert into an SS cult site.

The Quedlinburg camp was about 50 kilometers (31 miles) away from the Mittelbau main camp and was the most distant of the subcamps. It was probably established on September 17, 1944, when 21 IMIs were transferred from the main camp. A second transport with 19 Italians followed on September 28.¹ There are no records of any other transfers. An undated camp list (it could have been created on November 1, 1944) lists the names of 58 prisoners.¹ The same number is also recorded on a list dated March 31, 1945.

Gregorio Pialli wrote the only known report by a survivor of the camp. He was transferred from the main camp to Quedlinburg in the late summer of 1944.¹ According to Pialli, the prisoners were at first shifted from one building to another in the city. Later, a camp was established in a dilapidated building on the edge of the city, which was fenced in with barbed wire.

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Except for the Mittelbau Veränderungsmeldungen (THStA-W, KZ Buchenwald u. Hafta Nr. Dora Dok./K 395), and a few prisoner lists (AG-MD, Microfilm B 1), there are no written records that have survived on the Quedlinburg subcamp. Gregorio Pialli, a concentration camp survivor, has

**NOTES**


**ROSSLA**

The Junkers company had been allocated the northern section of the Kohnstein underground production facility. As a result, the Mittelwerk facilities were insufficient for production and storage in Kohnstein, and the company established several branch factories in the summer of 1944 in the Nordhausen area, where the parts for the Aggregat 4 (A4) rockets were stored. One of these branch factories was established at the beginning of August 1944 in the factory buildings of an unused sugar factory in Rossla, about 20 kilometers (12.4 miles) to the southeast of Nordhausen.

As with all Mittelwerk branch factories, concentration camp prisoners were initially deployed in Rossla. Initially, from August 1, 1944, around 100 prisoners were taken daily by rail from the Mittelbau camp to Rossla. Here they had to load and unload rail wagons that arrived from the main factory in Kohnstein. At the same time, the SS had the prisoners convert two barracks of the Reichsarbeitsdienst (Reich Labor Service) camp, which had been constructed in 1936, into accommodation for the concentration camp prisoners. One of the two barracks was fenced in with barbed wire and a security fence. On August 31, 1944, the new camp was opened when 82 prisoners from the Mittelbau camp moved in. The kitchen and infirmary were located in the second of the two barracks. There were around 20 SS guards accommodated in the barracks as well.

Scarcey any SS documents have survived that relate to the Rossla camp. The memoirs of Max Dutilleux, a French prisoner in Rossla, provide a striking report on the camp. Statements by the camp Kapo, Wilhelm Schmidt, have also survived. The statements were made to American officers a few days after the camp was liberated in April 1945. Finally, around the year 2000, a former Ukrainian prisoner reported on his time in the Rossla camp. According to the survivors’ reports, the prisoners were held in the fenced-in accommodation barracks. There were two sections in the barracks: the “Noble Quarter,” as Dutilleux named his section, was where the prisoner-functionaries as well as Polish, Czech, French, and Belgian prisoners were held, while in the “Proletarian Quarter” very young Russian prisoners were squeezed together tightly. The morning and evening roll call took place on the 10-meter-square (33-feet-square) area between the two barracks.

There were on average between 110 and 120 prisoners in the camp, the overwhelming majority of whom came from the Soviet Union, France, and Poland. The prisoner-functionaries were Germans. There was also a German medical doctor who looked after the infirmaries. Officially the infirmary was under the control of a local doctor, who was contracted to the infirmary. The sparse SS files refer to one death. It concerned a prisoner who was shot between December 21, 1944, and January 20, 1945, while “trying to escape.” This prisoner could be German Communist Hans Merker, who is said to have been a member of a resistance group in the Mittelbau camp.

The prisoners who were transferred to Rossla did not find the living and working conditions too bad when compared to the exhausting cavern excavation work that they had to do in Kohnstein. Loading and unloading rocket parts was very difficult work, but not as murderous as in the subterranean construction sites of many of the other Mittelbau-Dora camps. In addition, the arbitrary mistreatment by the guards and Kapos was kept within limits.

The camp leader was initially an SS noncommissioned officer. He was replaced in February 1945 by SS-Oberscharführer Welzel.

According to the former camp Kapo, on April 4, 1945, the day before the camp was evacuated, 30 prisoners who had been injured in an air raid on the Boelcke-Kaserne in Nordhausen arrived in Rossla. On the next morning, April 5, the SS camp leader ordered the camp’s evacuation. By foot in a column the prisoners marched via Rottleberode and Stolberg into the Harz. Between 8 and 10 prisoners each had to push 10 small flat trolleys that had been used in the camp to move rocket parts and that were now laden with supplies for the march and SS baggage. Marching via Halberstadt and Magdeburg, covering about 30 kilometers (19 miles) a day, they reached the Heinkel factory in Oranienburg. Prisoners who could not keep up or who tried to escape were shot by their guards, the first being shot on the first day of the march near Stolberg. The survivors arrived in Oranienburg on either April 17 or 18. They did not stay there for long, as the Oranienburg camp was evacuated on April 21. This time the prisoners from Rossla, who the SS maintained as a group, were forced to march in a northwesterly direction. After nine long and exhausting days, the guards disappeared just to the south of Schwerin—on May 1, 1945, the surviving Rossla prisoners were free.

The Rossla camp played no role in the Dachau Dora Trial in 1947, and even later there were no investigations or criminal proceedings in connection with the Rossla camp. In the local cemetery, there is the grave of a Pole who died in Octo-
ber 1944 in Rossla. Most likely the deceased was not, despite public speculation, a concentration camp prisoner.

**SOURCES** The Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp Veränderungsmeldungen produced by the SS administration refer to the transports to and from Rossla (THStA-W, KZ Buchenwald u. Hafta Nr. Dora Dok./K 395). A copy of an undated list of all of the camp’s inmates, possibly created on November 1, 1944, is to be found in the AG-MD (Microfilm B 1). Details on the work and living conditions in the camp, such as the death march route from Rossla via Oranienburg to Schwerin, are to be found in survivors’ memoirs (Report Viktor Tumizkij, 5.9.1996, AG-MD, EB/H Uk K 63). Max Dutilleux, a former prisoner, published his memoirs in France on his imprisonment in the concentration camps in Dora and Rossla: *Le camp des armes secrètes Dora-Mittelbau* (n.p., 1993).

**NOTE**

1. Monatsbericht Häftlingskrankenbau Lager Rossla, December 21, 1944, to January 20, 1945, NARA, Microfilm Publication M-1079, Roll 1, fr. 563.

**ROTTLEBERODE ("HEINRICH")**

As with many other Mittelbau camps, the camp “Heinrich” near Rottleberode was established as part of the plan to relocate part of German armaments underground. In the spring of 1944, the Jägerstab (Fighter Staff) authorized the Junkers aircraft factory at Schönebeck to convert the Heimkehle caves, close to the villages of Rottleberode and Uftrungen (present-day Sachsen-Anhalt), into an underground facility for the assembly of aircraft frames. SS-Führungstabe A5 was in charge of the construction work. It was part of SS-Gruppenführer Hans Kammler’s construction organization.

On March 13, 1944, 200 prisoners from the Buchenwald concentration camp commenced excavation in the caves, which until then had been a favorite destination for day trips by tourists. In the following months, the number of men increased from 500 to 700 prisoners. To accommodate the prisoners, the SS established the Heinrich subcamp on the edge of Rottleberode. It was at first administered from Buchenwald, but from October 1944, it became part of the Mittelbau concentration camp.¹

The Junkers company had leased a three-story building owned by the porcelain factory Max Schuck. The prisoners were held in this building, which was surrounded with an electrified fence and guard towers. A courtyard, about 50 meters (164 feet) long, between the building and the electrified fence served as the roll-call square. The ground floor of the building held the kitchen, washrooms, and storerooms. The prisoners’ sleeping and day quarters were on the two upper floors. The prisoners had to march 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) to the Heimkehle caves, which was a relatively long way to the production site. It would seem that Junkers and the SS in this case preferred that the prisoners were held in a relatively large stone building rather than establish a barracks camp closer to the Heimkehle caves.

The A5 construction project, with an area of 7,400 square meters (8,850 square yards), was a relatively small construction project. The “Thyra Werk” (the name given to it for purposes of secrecy) could soon commence operations, as the underground facilities were essentially in place except for the ventilation and the entrances to the caverns. From the end of July 1944, the Junkers (Ju) concentration camp prisoners and civilian workers were producing springs and parts for the Ju 88 and Ju 188 aircraft.²

Preferred were prisoners who had already worked in the factory at Schönebeck before it was relocated. They were used to working with the machines that were moved to Rottleberode. Prisoners were also preferred whom Junkers had examined in Buchenwald or who were transferred from the Junkers branch factory in Mühlhausen to Rottleberode. The prisoners who had wasted away in constructing the production facilities for the Thyra factory in the Heimkehle were then used on Project B-4, another construction project in nearby Stempeda. In August 1944, work began here in caverns for another Junkers relocation project. Unlike the A5 facility, this project would not be completed by the end of the war.

The Thyra Werk’s production prisoners (Fertigungshaftlinge), as they are called in the SS documents, and the Project B-4 construction prisoners (Bauhaftlinge) were at first accommodated together in the Heinrich camp in Rottleberode. The prisoners’ poor working conditions in the Project B-4 caverns and the resultant poor health in turn affected the camp conditions in Rottleberode: the infirmary was filled with exhausted prisoners from the detachment B4, and the camp was threatened with an outbreak of epidemics. Junkers then pressed for the separation of the Project B-4 Bauhaftlinge from the Thyra Werk Fertigungshäftlinge, because if they could not work, there would be economic consequences: there was not an unlimited supply of qualified and physically fit prisoners in the concentration camp to replace those prisoners who could not work.

At first, Junkers tried to get the SS to separate the Bauhaftlinge from the Fertigungshäftlinge in the porcelain factory. At the beginning of 1945, the SS finally established a separate camp in Stempeda for the construction project. From February 1945, an increasing number of Bauhaftlinge were permanently accommodated here.

However, the number of prisoners held in Rottleberode remained fairly constant. After production commenced in the Thyra Werk, 800 additional prisoners were sent by October 1944 to Rottleberode from Schönebeck, Mühlhausen, and Buchenwald. During this period, the SS moved around 230 Bauhaftlinge as forced laborers to the underground Project B-3, the Mittelbau main camp, and other subcamps. However, by the autumn of 1944, there were around 1,000 prisoners in the Heinrich camp. Additional transfers from...
Schönebeck increased this number by the beginning of January 1945 by another 100 prisoners.

A decisive point in the history of the Heinrich camp occurred at the end of January 1945 when around 450 Jewish prisoners, whom the SS had evacuated in the face of the advancing Red Army from Częstochowa via Buchenwald and the Dora camp, arrived at Rottleberode. Until this time, the camp prisoners were mostly non-Jewish Poles (in November 1944, they comprised around 45 percent of the camp inmates), Russians, French, Czechs, and Germans. Until January 1945, there were no Jewish prisoners in the camp. Most of the new Jewish prisoners were sent as forced labor to the caverns at the B-4 construction project near Stempeda. Here they were the victims of brutal mistreatment by SS, Kapos, and German civilian workers. Many Jews drowned in a pool at the entrance to the cavern.3

Until the end of 1944, the Heinrich camp was regarded by the concentration camp prisoners as relatively bearable, as a large number did not have to work on the debilitating construction work but were used in production at the Thya factory. There are no deaths recorded in the camp up to the end of 1944 and beginning of 1945. However, this changed with the murder of the Jewish camp inmates: alone in February and March 1945, the SS files record 50 deaths.

The dramatic worsening in conditions was also a result of a change in the camp leadership's personnel. At first the camp leader was SS-Untersturmführer Heinz Grabowski. There are no known negative reports on him. His removal in the autumn of 1944 probably had to do with a change of direction in his life and internal SS disputes.

The 30-year-old SS-Hauptscharführer Erhard Brauny was Grabowski's replacement. He had previously been Rapportführer in the Dora camp. Brauny himself rarely appeared alone. The reports of surviving prisoners always refer to him in the company of his official deputy, the 40-year-old SS-Unterscharführer Hermann Lamp. In Heinrich, Brauny and Lamp established a reign of terror that was based on corrupt and brutal Kapos and prisoner-functionaries. The Jewish prisoners from Częstochowa especially suffered under both. Brauny and Lamp were often drunk and, according to former Kapo and camp recorder Walter Ulbricht,4 shot at the prisoners every night. Other prisoners have accused Ulbricht himself of involvement in the mistreatment and murder of Jewish prisoners.5 Brauny and Lamp not only covered up the antisemitic outrages of their Kapo Ulbricht but were themselves particularly brutal toward the Jewish prisoners. As camp leader in the Stempa camp, Lamp was also responsible for the terror and murder in that camp.

Conditions worsened even more in the camp when Fritz de la Cour arrived. He had been sent to a concentration camp because he was a homosexual. He replaced the camp elder, Robert Hagen, who wore the green triangle of the criminals, on March 22, 1945. Hagen is said to have treated his fellow prisoners properly. De la Cour had been a feared Kapo in the Mittelbau-Dora camp before he was transferred to Heinrich. It is possible that he was transferred as a result of the approaching front to take over security measures as a prisoner-functionary.

The Heinrich subcamp was evacuated on the night of April 4–5, 1945. The 1,500 inmates from the Heinrich and Stempea camps were marched in two columns in the direction of Niedersachsen, which was not far from the Mittelbau main camp. Only the smaller column led by Brauny arrived. Lamp turned his group around following an air attack and commenced to march the next day across the Harz. Both groups were to meet dreadful fates: Lamp drove his 1,100 exhausted prisoners in daylong marches and by rail to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. A few days after their arrival, the survivors were driven on a new march, this time in a northwesterly direction. Only a few prisoners survived this death march.

Brauny's evacuation transport of around 400 prisoners ended at Gardelegen, where most of them died in the massacre at the Isenschneider barn. Around 1,000 prisoners from different concentration camps, including many from the SS-Baubrigade III and the Heinrich camp, were driven on the evening of April 13 not far from the city into the barn by members of the SS, Wehrmacht, and Volkssturm. The murderers then set the barn on fire and shot anyone who tried to escape the burning building. Only 20 to 25 prisoners were able to escape, using the darkness as protection, and stay hidden until they were rescued on the evening of the following day by the Americans.

A few of the survivors of the massacre came from the Heinrich camp, including Jewish prisoner Romuald Bak, who would be an important witness in the 1947 Dachau Dora Trial. He would seriously incriminate camp leader Erhard Brauny. Brauny was sentenced to life imprisonment and died in prison in 1950 in Landsberg. The former camp recorder, Walter Ulbricht, was also tried in Dachau. He was sentenced to five years' imprisonment. Brauny's deputy Lamp was never called to account before an Allied or German court. At the beginning of the 1980s, Hermann Ebender and a former Kapo were tried in the Rottleberode trial in Fulda: Lamp was a witness in the preliminary investigations. Ebender was acquitted.

SOURCES The Rottleberode Heinrich subcamp is not only well documented in the sources but in academic works. Worthy of mention are Mittelbau monographs by André Sellier, A History of the Dora camp (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, published in association with USHMM, 2003); and Jens-Christian Wagner, Produktion des Todes: Das KZ Mittelbau-Dora (Gottingen: Wallstein, 2001), which devote several passages to Rottleberode. Two publications deal with the death marches from Rottleberode to Gardelegen: Joachim Neander, Gardelegen 1945: Das Ende der Hoftingtransporte aus dem Konzentrationslager Mittelbau (Magdeburg, 1998); and Diana Gring, “...immer zwischen zwei Feuern! Eine Annäherung an die Biographie des kommunistischen Funktionshäftlings Karl Semmler,” BGNSVND 4 (1998): 97–105. Jens-Christian Wagner concentrates on the conditions of Jewish prisoners in Rottleberode in "Noch einmal: Arbeit und Vernichtung.}

There are numerous detailed witness statements from former prisoners and SS perpetrators in the files of the U.S. Dora Trial in Dachau in 1947 (U.S.A. vs. Arthur Andrée et al., NARA, RG 549. Microfilm Copy M-1079, Rolls 1–16). Documents from the SS camp administration (Transportlisten, Belegschaftslisten des Lagers, Stärkemeldungen, Rechnungen der SS an Firmen, die KZ-Häftlinge als Zwangsarbeitnehmer einsetzten) are to be found in the THStA-W (NS 4 Bu/136, Überstellungsmeldungen KZ Buchenwald, 1943–1945; KZ Buchenwald u. Hafta Nr. Dora Dok./K 395, Veränderungsmeldungen KZ Mittelbau-Dora, October 1, 1943–March 27, 1945). The surviving Junkers documents relating to Schönebeck and that contain references to the number of concentration camp prisoners used as forced labor are in the LASA-DO (Bestand Junkers-Werke). Finally, there are the judicial files: proceedings against Hermann Ebender are well documented in the files held by the BA-L (429 AR-Z 192/72). In his autobiography, Willy Mirbach, a former Luftwaffe soldier and concentration camp guard in Rottleberode, provides the perspective of a perpetrator, “Damit Du es später einmal deinem Sohn erzählen kannst . . .”: Der autobiographische Bericht eines perspective of a perpetrator, ed. Gerd Halmanns (Geldern: Verlag des Historischen Vereins für Geldern, 1997).

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NOTES

1. KZ Buchenwald, Aufstellung der Transporte in Aussenlager, THStA-W, NS 4 Bu/136a u. NS 4 Bu/136b, as well as Arbeitsinzatzmeldungen KZ Buchenwald, March to July 1944, THStA-W, NS 4 Bu/230. For the integration into the newly established Mittelbau concentration camp, see “Bericht zur Übergabe der Dora Betriebe [sic] als selbständiges Konzentrationslager am 28.10.1944,” Nuremberg Document NO-2317. Initially, only the Rottleberode prisoner detachments A5 and B–4 were subordinated to the Mittelbau concentration camp, that is, only the prisoners working on the Kammler staff construction sites, whereas those prisoners working for Junkers remained part of the Buchenwald concentration camp. On November 23, 1944, the prisoners from this detachment came under the control of the Mittelbau concentration camp; see KZ Buchenwald, Stärkemeldungen der Aussenlager, 1944, THStA-W, NS 4 Bu/210, Bl. 403 ff.

2. Verlagerungsübersicht Junkers Flugzeugwerke Schönebeck, March 15, 1945, LASO-DO, Junkers-Werke 1375, Bl. 10 u. 15.

3. Several survivors from the camp at Tschenstochau and Rottleberode later made statements in investigations into the Rottleberode camp, for example, statements by the former prisoners Hersch J., May 14, 1968, BA-L, 429 AR-Z 192/72, p. 88; Abraham E., May 23, 1968, ibid., p. 86; and Romuald Bak, September 25, 1947, ibid., p. 103.


STEMPEDA (“KOMMANDO B-4”) 999

The history of the Stempea camp is closely connected with the nearby Heinrich camp in Rottleberode, whose inmates had to work in a Junkers subterranean aircraft factory, which had been relocated from Schönebeck an der Elbe in the South Harz Mountains. In the summer of 1944, the Junkers AG decided to relocate its branch at Schönebeck to Stempea in the Harz, where three main shafts and seven cross-shafts with a total area of 12,000 to 14,000 square meters (14,352 to 16,744 square yards) in the Stolberg were to be excavated. The construction work was undertaken by the SS-Führungstab B-4 commanded by SS-Gruppenführer Hans Kammler, whose Jägerstab (Fighter Staff) was responsible for so-called Sonderbauvorhaben, or special construction projects, including securing the relocation of production of fighter aircraft underground.

The construction of the Project B-4 (code name “Lava”) began in August 1944. On August 25, the first 50 concentration camp prisoners from the Heinrich camp arrived at the construction site. This number remained constant during the autumn of 1944. At the end of January 1945, the number increased to more than 700 with the arrival of around 450 Jewish prisoners from Tschechenstochau (Częstochowa). As with most Jägerstab construction projects, the construction project B-4 was never completed, despite the ruthless exploitation of the prisoners. At the beginning of April 1945, the three caverns for vehicles had reached a length of between 150 and 200 meters (164 and 219 yards). Together with the completed cross-tunnels, there was a surface area of 3,700 square meters (4,425 square yards).

The prisoners working on the construction site B-4 were at first accommodated in the Heinrich camp at Rottleberode. After repeated protests from the Junkers company, which operated Heinrich as a prisoner camp for its branch factory relocated from Schönebeck (the Thyra Werk) and not as accommodation for the construction prisoners (Raubhaftlinge) of the Arbeitskommando B-4, the SS decided to establish at the end of 1944 a barracks camp close to the construction site, which from January 1945 was gradually occupied by concentration camp inmates.

The prisoners feared the Arbeitskommando B-4 for its murderous working conditions in the caverns. The Jewish prisoners from Tschechenstochau, in particular, suffered from mistreatment by the guards, Kapos, and civilian foremen. Some of those working in the caverns were beaten and died from injuries. Surviving prisoners reported later that in the winter of 1944–1945 SS members repeatedly drove Jewish prisoners into the ice-cold water in a pool at the entrance to the caverns, killing them. The SS described these murders of Jewish prisoners as “baptisms” (Taufe). This was obviously an indication of violent antisemitism, instigated by SS-Untersturmführer
Hermann Lamp, who was in command of the work detachment from the autumn of 1944. From January 1945, he was also in command of Stempeda. Many of the Jewish prisoners died working in the caverns. Foremen and Kapos in the caverns beat them to death in the caverns or drove over them with heavily laden tip carts. The SS-Bauleitung (Construction Management) and the building companies lost a large number of its workforce in this way but apparently did nothing to prevent these actions. It can be assumed that at least 50 prisoners did not survive working in the caverns B-4 and imprisonment in the Stempeda camp. It was possibly more.

Due to the debilitating work conditions, most of the prisoners from Stempeda were totally exhausted when the Americans approached the camp at the beginning of April 1945. In the night of April 4–5, two groups of prisoners were marched from Heinrich and Stempeda to the Niedersachsenwerfen railway station. However, only one of the groups arrived. The approximately 500 inmates of the Stempeda subcamp were in all probability part of the second group under the command of SS-Unterscharführer Lamp. Along the way, they were caught in an air raid and turned around. After spending the night near Rottleberode, the 1,000 prisoners on this death march were driven on April 5 by foot through Stolberg and Güntersberge through the Harz Mountains to Quedlinburg and from there across the Elbe to Genthin, where they arrived on April 12. The 800 survivors were loaded onto a train. Four days later, they arrived at the Sachsenhausen subcamp at Heinkelwerken in Oranienburg. From there the SS drove the few remaining prisoners still capable of walking on April 21 on a new death march—this time in a northwesterly direction. The last camp survivors from the Stempeda camp were liberated by the Red Army at the beginning of May 1945 near Schwerin.

Lamp, who led the death march until its arrival in Oranienburg and after the war lived near Lübeck, was never the subject of judicial proceedings. In 1984, former Kapo Ebender was tried before a Fulda court on the charge that he drowned Jewish prisoners from the work detachment B-4. He was acquitted for lack of evidence.

**SOURCES**


This essay is largely based on statements by surviving prisoners before the U.S. military court in the Dachau Dora Trial in 1947. The files are in NARA (RG 549) and were published on microfilm in 1979 (*Microfilm Publication M-1079*, Rolls 1–16, Dora Trial at Dachau, 1947). Other statements by surviving prisoners are to be found in the files of the trial of the former prisoner-functionary Hermann Ebender (BA-L, 429 AR-Z 192/72). Remnants of the files of the SS administration in Stempeda and the Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora concentration camps are held in the THStA-W (NS 4 Bu/136, Überstellungsmeldungen KZ Buchenwald; KZ Buchenwald u. Hafta Nr. Dora Dok./K 395, Veränderungsmeldungen KZ Mittelbau-Dora, October 1, 1943—March 27, 1945). Finally there is the company file of the Junkers-Werke in Schönebeck, which is part of the Junkers collection in the LASA-DO. Passages on the prisoners’ work and living conditions from the perspective of a guard are to be found in the autobiography of Luftwaffe soldier Willy Mirbach, “*Damit Du es später einmal deinem Sohn erzählen kannst . . .*”: *Der autobiographische Bericht eines Luftwaffenhilfsdienstes aus dem KZ Mittelbau (August 1944–Juli 1945)*, ed. Gerd Halmanns (Geldern: Verlag des Historischen Vereins für Geldern, 1997).

**NOTES**

1. Verlagerungsübersicht Junkers Flugzeugwerke Schönebeck, March 15, 1945, LASO-DO, Junkers-Werke 1375, Bl. 10 u. 15.


3. Figures from the Buchenwald concentration camp administration exist for the period until the camp was transferred to the newly formed Mittelbau concentration camp on October 28, 1944 (THStA-W, NS 4 Bu/221). At the end of January 1945, 400 Jewish prisoners from Tschechenstochau were transferred from the Buchenwald concentration camp and the Dora camp to Stempeda. At this point, there were supposed to have been 200 to 300 prisoners. Therefore, the estimated number of up to 700 prisoners is probably realistic—see the statements by former prisoner Hersch J., May 14, 1968, BA-L, 429 AR-Z 192/72, p. 88; Abraham E., May 23, 1968, ibid., p. 86; and Romuald Bak, September 25, 1947, ibid., p. 103.


**TETTENBORN**

Little is known about the subcamp in the small village of Tettenborn, about 20 kilometers (12.4 miles) to the west of Nordhausen. There are only two sources that refer to the camp: the Mittelbau concentration camp variation report...
(Veränderungsmeldung) of February 27, 1945, refers to the transfer of 2 prisoners from Tettenborn to the Mittelbau camp's infirmary; 1 and in the British Bergen-Belsen Trial of 1945, former Tettenborn camp elder Oskar Schmitz gave evidence. His statement provided nothing more than that the camp existed and that it had 28 inmates. 2

According to the former camp elder, some of the prisoners loaded the Aggregat 4 (A4) rockets at the Tettenborn railway station. The others probably, like their fellow prisoners in the SS-Baubrigade III camps at Nüxei and Mackenrode, worked at the construction sites for the planned Helmetalbahn.

It is possible that there were two subcamps in Tettenborn. The two prisoners transferred on February 27, 1945, to the Mittelbau camp's infirmary came, according to the Veränderungsmeldungen, from different camps: a “Kdo. Tettenborn” of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp—this can only refer to a Sachsenhausen subcamp of the SS-Baubrigade III, which came under the command of Sachsenhausen on January 15, 1945, and a “Kdo. Tettenborn” of the Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp. This could only have been a small camp that had held Schmitz since March 1945.

The camp in which Schmitz was the camp elder was evacuated on the evening of April 5, 1945, when its inmates were loaded onto the wagon of a railway transport that had shortly before left the Mittelbau main camp and that, after wandering through the Lüneburger Heide, arrived on April 10, 1945, at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp’s “barracks camp” (Kasernenlager).

Some years after the war’s end, in April 1960, a mass grave with the human remains of 26 concentration camp prisoners was found close to the Tettenborn railway station. The death of these people had nothing to do with the subcamp in the village. They were prisoners who attempted to escape from an evacuation transport from the Mittelbau main camp on April 7–8, 1945, as it was standing at the Tettenborn railway station, two days after the evacuation of the Tettenborn camp. At least 26 prisoners were shot by the SS guards, and their bodies were hastily buried by a prisoner detachment close to the railway embankment. In 1961, the dead were reinterred at the cemetery of honor at Holzen near Holzminden.


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TRAUTENSTEIN

Even before it became the independent Mittelbau concentration camp, the Dora camp had a number of subcamps that held only Italian military internees (IMls). One of these camps was in Trautenstein, a small village in the Harz, about five kilometers (three miles) to the west of Hasselfelde.

The camp was established on either September 17 or 18, 1944, when 20 Italians were transferred from the Dora camp. 1 Among them was a soldier, Antonio Bortot, whose memoirs of the camp constitute the only known survivor’s report. 2 According to Bortot, the camp inmates were accommodated in barracks in which there were two-tiered wooden bunk beds. The guard was the sole SS member, with the rank of SS-Scharführer, who, in comparison to others, treated the prisoners as human beings.

However, the working conditions were hard. Without sufficient winter clothing and feet covered only with wooden clogs, the prisoners spent the autumn of 1944 and the following snowy winter cutting a trail planned for a high-voltage electricity line through the forest. This section near Trautenstein was part of a line planned to extend from Frose to Bleicherode, but it was never completed. It was planned to supply energy to armaments factories around Mittelwerk near Niedersachsen. Formally, the clearing of the forest was under the command of SS-Obersturmführer Wilhelm Hünfeld of the SS-Führungsstab B-13. The SS-Führungsstab B-13 had engaged local sawmiller Wenneis und Tippe to process the timber.

The camp lasted for seven months. During that time, the number of prisoners greatly fluctuated. On December 12, 8 IMls were transferred from the Mittelbau camp. 3 With that, there were just 30 prisoners in the camp. Surviving records for the whole of the Mittelbau camps indicate that on April 2, 1945, there were only 11 prisoners in the Trautenstein camp. 4 The files do not reveal what happened to the other prisoners. There are no records of any deaths.

Unlike most of the other Mittelbau camps, the Trautenstein camp was not evacuated in April 1945. According to Bortot, the camp inmates were forced to march to a large city in the area (most likely Blankenburg or Wernigerode) but returned the same day with their guards to Trautenstein. The SS guards disappeared, and the prisoners were freed by the Americans on April 16 or 17. Trautenstein was the last Mittelbau camp to be liberated.

SOURCES The only secondary source on Trautenstein is an essay by Joachim Neander, “Die Aussenlager 'Türmalin' (Re genstein), Quedlinburg und Trautenstein des KZ Mittelbau-Dora,” in Erinnern: Aufgabe, Chance, Herausforderung (Magdeburg, 2000), pp. 1–11.

The sole surviving SS documents on the Trautenstein
subcamp are the Mittelbau-Dora Veränderungsmeldungen (THStA-W, KZ Buchenwald u. Hafta Nr. Dora Dok./K 395). For details on the construction of the high-voltage power line from Frose to Bleicherode, see the files from the ASt-Blb. (Akte Fo II, Korrespondenz der Herzoglichen Forstverwal- tung Blankenburg, 1943–45), the LASO-DO (Akte Kreisbe- hörden Blankenburg 6378, Bau der Starkstromleitung Frose-Niedersachsenwerfen, 1944/45), and the THStA-W (Akte Landesplanungsgemeinschaft Thüringen 261, Bau der Starkstromleitung Frose-Bleicherode, 1944/45). Prisoner Antonio Bortot published his memoirs as Oltre il tunnel la sprenza: Racc- olta da Luciano Tentonelle (Silea Treviso, 1994).

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2. Antonio Bortot, Oltre il tunnel la sprenza: Raccolta da Luciano Tentonelle (Silea Treviso, 1994).
4. In his memoirs, Italian Antonio Muscaritolo also refers to 12 prisoners in Trautenstein. Muscaritolo escaped from the death march from the Dora camp across the Harz near Trautenstein. He was liberated with other Trautenstein in- mates whose guards had already fled. See Bericht Antonio Muscaritolo, November 2003, AG-MD, P1, vol. 28.

WICKERODE

The Wickerode subcamp is one of a number of smaller Mit- telbau subcamps that were solely occupied by Italian military internees (IMIs). The people of the small village, which had around 300 inhabitants and which was located about 25 kilometers (15.5 miles) to the east of Nordhausen, could clearly distinguish the IMIs from other Mittelbau prisoners. They did not wear the usual blue-gray prisoners’ uniform but olive drab military uniforms.

The Wickerode camp was established in the middle of January 1945 when 30 Italians were transferred from the main Mittelbau camp to improvised accommodations most likely in the Herbig Inn.1 According to German eyewitnesses, the IMIs worked for the Dietrich company based in Calbe doing earthworks for the construction of an aboveground gas pipe- line. This corresponds with a postwar statement by the Mit- telbau “Arbeitseinsatzführers,” according to which the Wickerode camp was part of the SS-Führungstab B-18, in turn, part of the SS-Gruppenführer Hans Kammler con- struction organization.2 The Bauvorhaben B-18 most likely functioned to improve the infrastructure in the Nordhausen armaments centers.

The daily Mittelbau change reports (Veränderungsmeldun- gen) do not refer to any other prisoner transports to the Wick- erode camp. It is therefore likely that the camp had no more than 30 inmates. There are no records of any deaths.

The camp leader was SS-Unterscharführer Hübner.3 According to German eyewitnesses, the prisoners worked without guards, which, as reports from other Mittelbau camps show, was not unusual for IMIs. It is possible that in Wick- erode there was in addition to SS-Unterscharführer Hübner another one or two SS members who were guards.

It still remains unclear whether the Wickerode subcamp was evacuated at the end of the war and the prisoners sent on a death march. Taking into account the small subcamps at Trautenstein and Quedlinburg, which also held internees and were not evacuated, it is likely that the prisoners were liberated by American troops while still in the camp. If this is so, the camp would have existed on the morning of April 12, 1945, when units of the U.S. Third Armored Division took the village.

SOURCES SS sources refer to the camp twice, once in an Überstellungsmeldung of 30 prisoners from January 16, 1945 (Veränderungsmeldungen KZ Mittelbau-Dora, THStA-W, KZ Buchenwald u. Hafta Nr. Dora Dok./K 395); and the other in a note from February 20, 1945, which refers to the camp leader as an SS-Unterscharführer Hüb- ner (NARA, M-1079, Roll 1, fr. 796). Finally, there is a list of the SS-Baustäbe and camps within the Mittelbau concentra- tion camp area, prepared in 1947 by former Mittelbau concentra- tion camp Arbeitseinsatzführer Wilhelm Simon for the U.S. Dora Trial in Dachau (NARA, M-1079, Roll 12, fr. 251).

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