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The worst POW camp in Germany

Prisoners of War in Nuremberg 1939-1945: A Case Study

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Nuremberg was the epicenter of Nazi propaganda as the site of the party rallies and printing place of the infamous tabloid *Der Stürmer* – but how did that impact the treatment of thousands of Allied POWs in the city during World War 2? Written by a professional archivist and historian with 30 years of experience on the basis of two decades of research on the subject, this comprehensive e-book brings crucial, previously untranslated foreign, especially German sources to the English-speaking world for the first time to reveal the stark reality faced by American, British, Dutch, French, Italian, Polish, Soviet, Yugoslav and other POWs and by contextualizing them creates a powerful narrative.

This rigorously researched and amply illustrated, case-study style examination of POWs in Nazi Germany centered on Nuremberg sheds light on the human experience of captivity across multiple national perspectives in the charged environment of ideology, economic forces and the course of the war: Get instant access to this groundbreaking historical PDF!

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Contents

License Terms & Imprint 2
Introduction 3
Framework
International Law 6
The Organization of POW Issues in Nazi Germany 7
The Most German of all German Cities: Nuremberg 1939-1945
History, Economy, Politics 9
The Sources regarding the POW Camps in Nuremberg 16
Ilag 18
Stalag, Dulag, Oflag
Chronological Overview 24
Development 25
Shoot-to-kill Order by Colonel Pellet, July 29, 1944 36
The Map of the Camp in 1944 38
The Liberation on April 17, 1945 42
Organization 44
Aspects of the Presence of POWs in Nuremberg
Living Conditions: Example *Lutherschule* 47
German Population and Propaganda 49
POWs in the Nuremberg Nazi Tabloid *Der Stürmer* 55
Contacts with Civilians 62
Crimes Committed against POWs (see below Excerpt from the Book) 66
The Employment of the POWs 67
Examples for POWs from Various Nations
Polish 71
Treatment of POWs at their Capture: France, June 1940 79
French 81
Yugoslavs (Serbs) 90
Dutch 93
Diary of Lieutenant Colonel of the Artillery Albert van der Waag from his Captivity May 15 till July 7, 1942 96
Soviets 107
IMIs 123
British, South African, Greek 138
U.S. Americans 141
The Senior American Officer's Complaint about Conditions at Stalag XIII D, Nuremberg 142
Exemplary Cases of American POWs in Nuremberg 144
Remembrance – Nuremberg Style 151
About the Author 159
English eBooks by *testimon publishers* 161

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Excerpt from the Book

Crimes Committed against POWs

Even if the propaganda in regard to the sabotage of German moral which was so important to the Nazis missed its effect on some people, it certainly had its effects elsewhere. Violent crimes all the way up to the murder of POWs at the work place and in their housing facilities were witnessed several times.[1] They cannot be dismissed as assaults by a few fanatics, because those responsible in the German army also called for *strictness* and *pitilessness* in cases of alleged insubordination of the foreign soldiers. Sixty years after the fact an eyewitness described one such incident with a Soviet POW in the company where he had been an apprentice in the following way:[2]

The captured [Red Army soldiers] *were sometimes not treated well, that is clear* [...]. *We had factory police at work, and they naturally treated the prisoners poorly. They were mostly either SA or SS people who were released from active military service* [...]. *It was exactly on the first day I came to work there* [...]. *There was an electricians workshop, and next to it we had our own kitchen, and in front of the kitchen stood a few barrels. The kitchen crew threw away their scraps in those barrels, potato peels and such. I walked out of the workshop and saw how a Russian was searching for something in one and pulled out a few potato peels. They probably ate that because the POWs had really miserable food. So, he is gathering a few potato peels, and one of those guards comes along* [...] *and sees that the Russian is looking for something in the barrel and he just walks on for a little bit. There was raw material there, for example brass and copper rods* [...]. *He went and grabbed a brass rod and went back and hit the Russian with full force a number of times directly over the head! That was so serious for me, that when I came home, I told my mother: "I'm not going to work anymore!"* [...] *And two days later one of the factory police came and brought me back to the workshop. And then I had to go to the director. I then described to him why I didn't want to come back. Then he said he would fix it* [...]. *He was telling me how really sorry he was and said that the man who did that would be taken to task for it* [...].

Holocaust survivor Herbert Kolb reported on another repeated crime committed against POWs from Eastern Europe:[3]

I remember, and it was no secret at the time, that Russian and Serbian POWs were shot almost daily in one of Nuremberg's cemeteries (I think it was the South Cemetery).

These murders – even in Nazi Germany regular death penalties were not executed in cemeteries – could only have happened with the knowledge of the Stalag commander.

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1 For example: NCA, F 19 #27, Johannes Meister: Bei der Einsatzgefolgschaft und als Luftwaffenhelfer bei der Flak, typed manuscript (Nuremberg: 1995 / hereinafter: Meister, Einsatzgefolgschaft), 14-17, describes the murder of a Soviet helper by his superior. See also List, Menschen, 118, and the reports of former POWs of various nationalities below. Till today there is no study that investigates the prosecution of such crimes in and around Nuremberg.

2 NCA, F 19 #1, Interview with Mr. Robert Gerstacker on Oct. 30, 2004.

3 Email of Herbert Kolb to the author, Jan. 4, 1999.

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