**Camp 62** **- The Moor Camp, Thankerton, Lanarkshire**

Included in the 1945 ICRC camp list – Labour Camp. 62. The Moor Camp, Thankerton, Biggar, Lanarkshire

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| **1947 Camp List** |
| 62(G.W.C.) | The Moor Camp, Thankerton, Biggar, Lanarkshire | Sc. | Priswar, Thankerton | Thankerton 45 | Thankerton | Lt.Col.W.A. Rumsey | v/1453/2 |

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| **Prisoner of War Camps (1939 – 1948) - Project report by Roger J.C. Thomas - English Heritage 2003** |
| OS NGR | Sheet | No. | Name & Location | County | Cond’n | Type 1945 | Comments |
|  |  | 62 | The Moor Camp, Thankerton, Biggar | Lanarkshire |  | German Working Camp | Scotland |

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| **Location:** NGR NS 958 382. Shown on the map as a hostel on Thankerton Moor. About 1.5 km W of Thankerton; 9.5 km SE from Lanark.**Before the camp:** Moorland**Pow Camp:** Listed as an Italian working camp / labour battalion, then German pows.**11 November 1942** - International Red Cross inspection - Italian prisoners, capacity 525.**1943** – Hostels listed for Italian pows; East Kilbride / Peebles / Broughton / Netherholme / Stanrigg**5 May 1944** - Hostels listed for Italian pows from this camp on, (WO 32/10737): Bowridge, Carluke, South Lanarkshire / East Kilbride, Glasgow / Netherholme, Strathaven, Lanarkshire / Polloch, Glenfinnan, Inverness-shire**May and November 1944** - The camp was listed as an Italian Labour Battalion under the Scottish Command area and then as an Italian Working camp, (WO 32/10737). The Italians were recorded as non-co-operators.Recollections of Gaetano Rossi, Italian priest, internee, then parish priest in Glasgow 1940-1945 - oral history of visits to Thankerton Camp. Camp leader ‘Lorreti’ (spelling?) was a communist who abused his power to the extent that some of the pows plotted to kill him, fortunately this was not carried out.IWM - <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80012641>**1 August 1945** - an urgent memorandum was sent to this camp, and others, about  |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1957 |

maintaining records of Italians who were classed as ‘co-operators.’ At this point many of the Italian pows were in hostels / billets. The last Italians left this camp in 1946.

Memories from Henry McMahon: “*The Italian prisoners were playing football and wore hairnets and hair bands. On the road which ran into the east end North Lodge they had a long sunken bowling alley.*

*I befriended one... he looked after the pigs at the camp and on Sunday he attended Mass at St Marys in Lanark. We still keep in contact today 2004.*

*The Italians left and were replaced by the Germans. What an industrious lot they were, the field was immediately planted with potatoes and when the war was over they had an open day for us Thankertonians, with sports for every one. This was followed by a concert by the camp orchestra. Without doubt the finest concert ever held in Thankerton Hall. I can still remember the opening march by Von Souse. The German choir also sang ‘Loch Lomond’ and some others in perfect English.*

*The lead violinist was a good-looking chap and along with several others played with the Berlin Philharmonic. I remember my sister who had a fancy for him. An accordionist played Colsanders by Monte a virtuosi piece*.” (From Clydesdale Heritage site).

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| Oversight and development of re-education activities and English teaching for German pows was carried out by PID (Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office) / COGA (Control Office for Germany and Austria – UK). Visits and reports were made. The standard of the reports varied greatly. The visitors took little interest, if any, in activities other than re-education. They rarely mentioned welfare, sports, games, pastimes, crafts, etc of the pows. |

**10/12 August 1946** – English Inspector’s report. Strength 1185. 81 pupils in 8 classes at all sites + others studying independently.

Commandant: Lt Col Rumsey Lagersprecher (Camp leader): Hans Kohler

2nd i/c: Major May

Many of the pows had been transferred from camps in the USA. In general, their morale was low as they had been misinformed in the US that they were to be returned to Germany.

Blackboards needed at the hostels.

**23/28 October 1946** – Visit by Segregation Section members for political screening. Total strength; 1 officer (the M.O.), and 1111 Other Ranks.

Commandant: Lt Col W A Rumsey Camp leader: O.Fw Thieme

Interpreter: Sgt V Derer (Czech) Deputy C/L: Uffz Bengels

The senior British staff were seen to have positive attitudes towards re-education activities, (this was largely discounted in later reports).

The camp leader, Friedrich Thieme, aged 34, was a clerk, then in the army from 1932, “*a decent, reliable type.”*

Deputy leader, Matthias Bengels, aged 34, in the army since 1930, had not been a Nazi Party member and had a democratic outlook.

The M.O., Oberarzt Dr Kuno Gloeckeler (A) was also the dentist, aged 38. Anti-Nazi, 1944 he had broadcast from Luxembourg for the US Army, (presumably speaking to German armed forces).

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| Only 476 of the pows had been politically screened: | A+ | A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C | B/C |
| - | 64 | - | 56 | 263 | 9 | 85 | 1 |

The commandant was particularly concerned about 80 U-boat men who had been graded ‘C.’ They stated that they had come to the UK after the armistice on the understanding that they would be released one or two months after their arrival. They were not re-screened during this visit.

Morale was recorded as improving, mainly due to scrupulously fair treatment and contact with British civilians. One negative factor was the lack of mail, especially from the Russian zone. There was little interest in politics.

Some re-education activities had started, though the standard list was not provided. Camp activities were affected by late nights working for the harvest.

Newspapers – a small number of British papers received.

Lectures – started, regular.

Camp magazine – fortnightly, ‘*Echo Thankerton Die Deutschen Kriegsgefangenen Des lagers 62*’, (Thankerton Echo for the POWs of Camp 62). Two copies are held by the Imperial War Museum, Catalogue LBY E.J. 347

Religion – Protestant padre, Uffz Paul Schoenfeld (B+), aged 44, a deacon – “*he takes his present task very seriously and is sincerely interested in spreading his faith.”* Anti-communist, but otherwise not political.

No other camp activities were recorded.

**16/18 March 1947** – English Inspector’s Report. Total strength; 815. 23 pows in 4 classes – a large fall in numbers after initial enthusiasm, as shown in other camps.

Change to camp leader since February: Uffz Willi Ernst (B+)

Major snowfalls made all transport difficult, many roads were blocked.

**19/21 April 1947** – Re-education survey. Strength; 1 officer, 817 OR.

No changes to senior staff, other than there was no deputy camp leader.

The Commandant was due to leave and take command of Happendon Camp 19. His successor was due to be Major Currey, 2nd i/c at Castle Rankine Camp 64.

The camp leader was described as “*a quiet type, 30 years of age and tax official in civil life*.” He was regarded as well capable.

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| Political screening: | A | B+ | B | B- | C |
|  | 5 | 145 | 490 | 82 | 96 |

88 appeals had been made against screening grades, (the better the grade, the sooner repatriated, in theory). It was expected that most of the C grades would be raised to B in the next screening. 743 pows repatriated to date.

Morale was recorded as *“fairly low*.” The main issues were; a. general apathy while awaiting repatriation, b. weather conditions at the camp, wet and windy, c. remoteness, d. “*perverse attitude”* of the British quartermaster, an old soldier who seemed to the pows to be withholding clothing and equipment.

There was some resistance by the Commandant and British staff to allow political discussion, the visitor tried to persuade them to allow discussion groups to develop. There was some anti-British feeling, but no extreme politics in evidence.

40% of the pows were ‘youth’ (under-25). Most were politically apathetic, their main interests being sport and the cinema.

The standard list of re-education activities was given:

Wochenpost & Ausblick – 150 / 75 copies respectively.

Newspapers – a wide range of British papers paid for from the welfare fund, (monies raised through sales in the canteen). 6/8 copies of German papers received weekly. The attitude of the British staff was demonstrated as they believed the pows; “*learn too much from the British press!”*

Library – 833 books and 150 English language textbooks. More fiction books requested.

Lectures – regular, but poorly attended due to “*low intellectual level”* and lack of trust.

Discussion groups – Weekly, attended by 12-20 pows.

Films – YMCA and Gaumont British alternate weeks. GB films were not popular as they were too often old and without German texts; there was also a fee, usually 6d per pow but the welfare fund paid half at this camp.

Wireless – 4 sets in main camp; the canteen, medical centre, barbers and 1 set out of order – good reception. Each hostel had its own set.

Camp magazine – 110 copies fortnightly. Very few pow contributed articles.

Press review – None

Information room – an exhibition of text and pictures about Russia had been sent by COGA. Some pows contributed further information.

English Instruction – 30 pupils in classes and 100 studying independently. ‘English For All,’ a very popular teaching text, had not been received for 8 weeks – no explanation given, possibly weather conditions.

Other Camp Activities –

Religion – 15-20% attended services in the camp. RC pows were able to attend churches in Lanark and Biggar, protestants at Lanark and Thankerton – when transport allowed. There were prayer meetings and Bible studies. Pows in the hostels were able to visit local churches.

Education – small classes for French, shorthand, violin. Education affected by general apathy.

Entertainments – A 12 member theatre group gave variety shows. A 12 member orchestra performed operetta and light music. A quartet performed chamber music and poetical evenings. The choirs had ceased.

Main physical activities were football, volleyball and table tennis. Chess was popular and a pow team played against local teams.

**9 June 1947** - English Inspector’s Report. Total strength - not given. 47 pows in 4 classes at all sites.

Commandant: Major Currie.

General comments made that the pows had an excellent local reputation and were on good terms with civilians. “*Since Major Currie took over the education and welfare matters have leapt forward very noticeably.”*

**26/27 June 1947** – Re-education survey. Strength; 2 officers, 891 OR.

A deputy camp leader was in place: F Lemmens (B-), “*active and intelligent*.” No other changes to senior personnel.

The new commandant was actively encouraging re-education and other activities.

Simplified screening in use: A 2 / B 891. 801 pows repatriated to date.

Morale had improved with the new commandant. Relationships with British staff was improving, apart from the quarter master.

The standard list of re-education activities was similar to the previous report. Main changes being –

Newspapers – a wider selection and a few more German and Swiss papers.

Library – 1000 books.

Discussion group – discontinued during the summer.

Films – Scottish Information Unit films added to the showings.

Other activities –

Religion – the RC priest from camp 19 was visiting monthly.

Education – only French classes continued.

Entertainment – Pows from the hostels visited the main camp to see theatre and orchestra performances. A choir had been started.

Outside contacts – local informal relationships were good. Local ministers visited the camp. 2 pows attended Glasgow University for 1 week. Groups of 20/30 visited Glasgow each Saturday arranged by the YMCA and Society of Friends – they toured the city and were entertained at musical evenings. Pows attended Combined Services held in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Ayr.

**19/21 September 1947** - English Inspector’s Report. Total strength; 1030. 40 pows in 4 classes

**14 November 1947** - Camp number included in an ‘Urgent Memorandum’ (FO 939/270) regarding inspection of food parcels.

**14 November 1947** – The Carluke and Lanark Gazette recorded that a chess match against the pow team had been brought forward as many of the pows were due to leave.

No further documents filed – it is believed the camp closed late 1947.

Known Camp commandants:

C.1946-7 Lieutenant Colonel W A Rumsey from the Royal Tank Regiment. Later in year recorded as cc at Happendon Camp 19.

1947 – Major Currie, previously 2nd i/c at Castle Rankine Camp 64.

**After the camp:** Site became Thankerton Camp Farm.

**Further information:**

National Archives FO 939/143 62 Working Camp, moor Camp, Thankerton, Lanarkshire. Dated 1946-1947. Used above.

Canmore – very little – *“A prisoner-of-war camp is visible at this location on RAF aerial photographs (106G/Scot/UK 83: 3108, 3109; 106G/Scot/UK 81: 4415) taken on 10 May 1946*. <http://canmore.org.uk/site/190656>

**Camp and hostels + number of pows where known:**

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|  | Not open |  | Unknown |  | Open |  | With another camp |

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 1944 | 8/1946 (1) | 10/1946 | 3/1947 | 4/1947 | 6/1947 | 9/1947 |
| Main |  |  |  | 565 | 769 (2) | 386 | 358 | 454 (3) | 520 |
| Broughton |  |  | With C12 | 37 | 39 |  |  |  |  |
| East Kilbride |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Netherholme |  |  |  | 54 | 47 |  |  |  | 10 |
| Peebles |  |  | With C12 | 120 | 126 | 108 | 141 | 139 | 225 |
| Stanrigg |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bowridge |  |  |  | 53 | 54 | 29 | 50 | 64 | 55 |
| Polloch |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mid Netherton |  |  |  | 90 | 77 | 30 | 33 |  |  |
| Billets |  |  |  | 283 |  | 247 | 236 | 229 | 220 |
| Total | 525 cap |  |  | 1185 | 1112 | 815 | 818 | 893 | 1030 |

1. + one unnamed empty hostel. 2. Including billetees 3. + 7 in hospital.

**Hostels**

**Bowridge**, Carluke, South Lanarkshire. Huts. NS 851 528. (Map shown OS 1958).

**1944** – Recorded as a hostel for Italian pows.

**10/1946** – Hostel leader; O.Faehnr Pius Scherer (B+), student of law, RC, “*not a strong character but a decent type.”*

**4/1947** – Hostel leader; Gefr Erich Skrade (B), aged 40, a merchant, *“of no outstanding personality but capable of carrying out his duties.”*

Morale recorded as ‘not high,’ but better than in the main camp. No electric supply, oil lamp lighting used. The hostel was in an exposed position.

**6/1947** – same hostel leader.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 1944 | 8/1946 | 10/1946 | 3/1947 | 4/1947 | 6/1947 | 9/1947 |
| Bowridge |  |  |  | 53 | 54 | 29 | 50 | 64 | 55 |

**Broughton.** Huts. NT 112 364. Broughton is a small village in the Borders region – a nearby pow site was recorded at Rachan, 2km to the SE of Broughton.

**1943** - listed as a hostel for Italian pows attached to Camp 62

**1944** – listed attached to Donaldson’s School Camp 12.

**10/1946** – listed back with Camp 62. Hostel leader; Ofw Heinrich Erwig (B+), salesman, “*a lively and intelligent man…. His talk is too good to be taken completely at its face value.”*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 1944 | 8/1946 | 10/1946 | 3/1947 | 4/1947 | 6/1947 | 9/1947 |
| Broughton |  |  | With C12 | 37 | 39 |  |  |  |  |

**East Kilbride**, Glasgow

**1943 / 1944** – listed as a hostel for Italian pows.

Probably attached to a different camp after these entries.

Brief entry about a pow who was sent to East Kilbride hostel and was then billeted to a local farm;

<https://www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/stories/scottish-history-and-archaeology/wester-kittochside/wester-kittochside/prisoners-of-war-at-east-kilbride/>

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 1944 | 8/1946 (1) | 10/1946 | 3/1947 | 4/1947 | 6/1947 | 9/1947 |
| East Kilbride |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Mid Netherton.** Huts. Mid Netherton farm was located at NS 590 582.

The hostel was probably linked to a different main camp before these entries.

**5/1946** – correspondence about some pows who wanted to take an English exam who had been transferred from Johnstone Camp 188

**10/1946** – hostel leader; Ofw Konrad Schanze (B), aged 30, Joined Nazi Party in 1933 and the army in 1936. “*Uninteresting*.”

**4/1947** – Hostel leader; St.Fw Fritz Boehlert (B)

Recorded as having a high morale with good living conditions, central heating and close to Glasgow.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 1944 | 8/1946 | 10/1946 | 3/1947 | 4/1947 | 6/1947 | 9/1947 |
| Mid Netherton |  |  |  | 90 | 77 | 30 | 33 |  |  |



**Netherholme**, Strathaven, Lanarkshire. Huts. Netherholme farm located at NS 685 421.

**1943 / 1944** – Listed as a hostel for Italian pows.

**10/1946** – Hostel leader; Ofw Hermann Schneck (B+), aged 28, soldier.

Unexplained gap from 10/1946 to 9/1947 – may have been administered by a different main camp.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 1944 | 8/1946 | 10/1946 | 3/1947 | 4/1947 | 6/1947 | 9/1947 |
| Netherholme |  |  |  | 54 | 47 |  |  |  | 10 |

**Peebles.** Huts.

**1943** - listed as a hostel for Italian pows attached to Camp 62

**1944** – attached to Donaldson’s School Camp 12.

**10/1946** – Back with Camp 62. Hostel leader; Wm Walter Vorderwuelbecke (A), aged 30, “*outstanding personality of the camp*.” Was an active Catholic youth leader until 1937; a Christian-socialistic outlook.

**4/1947** – Hostel leader; Ofw Hermann Schneck (B+) – had been leader at Netherholme, aged 27, a building operative, “*although a common type he has a good will in respect of improving the PW outlook on life.”*

Morale was better than at the main camp due to better location in the town, pleasant surroundings, and civilian contacts.

**6/1947** – same hostel leader.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 1944 | 8/1946 | 10/1946 | 3/1947 | 4/1947 | 6/1947 | 9/1947 |
| Peebles |  |  | With C12 | 120 | 126 | 108 | 141 | 139 | 225 |

**Polloch,** Glenfinnan, Inverness-shire

**1944** – listed as a hostel for Italian pows

Probably linked to a different main camp after this date.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 1944 | 8/1946 | 10/1946 | 3/1947 | 4/1947 | 6/1947 | 9/1947 |
| Polloch |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Stanrigg**

**1943** – listed as a hostel for Italian pows

Probably linked to a different main camp after this date.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 1944 | 8/1946 | 10/1946 | 3/1947 | 4/1947 | 6/1947 | 9/1947 |
| Stanrigg |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |