**Camp 67** **- Sandyhillock Camp, Craigellachie, Banffshire (aka Rothes)**

Included in the 1945 ICRC camp list – Labour Camp. 67. Sandyhillock Camp, Craigellachie, Banffs.

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| **1947 Camp List** | | | | | | | |
| 67(G.W.C.) | Sandyhillock Camp, Craigellachie, Banffshire. | Sc. | Priswar, Craigellachie | Carren 225 | Craigellachie | Lt.Col.H.Lawton, M.B.E. | 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 |
|  |  | 67 | Sandyhillock Camp, Craigellachie | Banffshire |  | German Working Camp | Scotland |

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| --- | --- |
| **Location:** NGR NJ 256 449. 1946 aerial photograph shows the camp to be 275m S of Sandyhillock farm. About 3.5 km W of Craigellachie, 4.5 km S of Rothes.  **Before the camp:** Farmland  **Pow camp:** Listed as an Italian working camp / labour battalion to at least 1945, then a German Working Camp. Standard type camp with at least 39 Nissen type huts in a main compound enclosed by a barbed wire fence. About 27 guard huts and offices at the ‘front,’ alongside the B9102 road. There was a recreation area and sewage works.  Memories of the camp by Jean Mark – “*Each day a lorry would bring a group of men from the camp to work at the farm. The 4 or 5 mostly young single men enjoyed working at the farm. They brought pieces of bread with them along with ground coffee and Jean’s mother made them dinner with everyone else. Initially she had to be shown by one of the Italian POWs called Mario how to make coffee.*  *Later on in the war German POWs also arrived at the camp. Towards the end of the war or just after her mother decided one day to take two of the POWs to the local cinema as a treat. As this sort of activity was not allowed for POWs she had to dress the two Germans up in long black overcoats to hide the PW lettering on their trousers below their knees along with the PW written across the backs of their black tops.*  *After the war Eric Penno, one of the German POWs stayed behind. Eventually he married Margaret, one of Jean’s sisters. He did return to Germany to see his family after war, but returned to continue working at Bomakelloch.*” (Recorded by [Moray Heritage Memory Project](https://wrvsmorayheritagememories.wordpress.com/) ).  **1942** – opened for Italian pows, (exact date not confirmed).  **1943** – Hostels for Italian pows listed at ‘Rothes Camp 67’; Dallas – Logie – Fochabers.  **May and November 1944** - The camp was listed as an Italian Labour Battalion under the Scottish Command area, (WO 32/10737). |  |
| 1959 Ordnance Survey |

**31 January 1944** – Elgin Sheriff Court, Record of Fatal Accidents – “*Ferdinando Iannetti, Italian prisoner of war, 67th Prisoner of War Camp, Sandyhillock, Elchies, Knockando Parish, Morayshire, died 31 Jan 1944 as a result of drowning”*, (National Records of Scotland, Ref SC26/28/1944/2). He was later reinterred at Brookwood Military Cemetery.

**1 August 1945** - an urgent memorandum was sent to this camp, and others, about maintaining records of Italians who were classed as ‘co-operators’. At this point many, sometimes all, of the Italian pows were in hostels / billets. Italians were present at this camp until early 1946.

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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. |

**30 September & 1 October 1945** – English Inspector’s report. The camp was still recorded as an Italian Labour Battalion.

Commandant – Major Murray-Lyon.

**Spring 1946** – Camp listed as a German Working Camp. Many of the pows were from camps in the USA. They had been misinformed in the US that they were to be returned to Germany – consequently, finding themselves in a UK pow camp, morale was often low.

**11/12 July 1946** – Re-education survey and re-screening of 16 pows. Strength; 1 officer (the M.O.), 1017 Other Ranks.

Commandant: Major Murray-Lyon, M.C. Camp leader: St.Fwl Wilhelm Kiel.

Interpreter: S/Sgt J V Shepherd. Deputy C/L: O.Maat H Winnacker

German M.O.: Dr Arno Bachert

S/Sgt Shepherd was supportive of re-education, “*but lacks the ability to become a positive influence*.”

Morale was improving. Positive factors; 5 pows had recently been repatriated which “*caused considerable stir*” – pows from USA were settling down – mail facilities operational – re-education and entertainment activities.

Only 1/3 of pows had been politically screened. Nazism was not openly displayed, but some still held on to authoritarian views. Some pows from the Russian zone showed an interest in communism, but were not active. Another group of pows, mostly in Barrack 14, were causing trouble and had an anti-allied attitude.

The standard list of re-education activities was given:

Wochenpost and Ausblick – 120 / 30 copies respectively.

Newspapers – poor. Only The Scotsman received officially. Pows obtained further papers from their places of employment. Very few German or Swiss papers had been received.

Library – poor. Only 468 books, nearly half of which were textbooks.

Lectures – visiting lecturers had started, two so far.

Discussion Groups – popular, held once or twice a week in the main camp and most hostels had similar groups.

Films – from YMCA every three weeks in main camp. Fully attended.

Wireless – sets at all sites except Dallas.

Camp magazine – Just started its first printing.

Other activities –

Religion – Approximately 2/3 protestant, 1/3 RC – but a low interest. A British RC padre visited weekly for mass on Sundays. Protestants met for Bible reading and hymns. There was a small chapel in the camp.

Education – Classes in main camp for French, mathematics, electrical engineering, bookkeeping. No classes recorded for the hostels.

Entertainment – active, but no details given

**1 August 1946** – English Inspector’s Report. Strength 1148. 70 pow pupils in 8 classes at all sites + a number studying privately. Lessons taken in a large theatre.

The camp was due to expand and Major Murray-Lyon was being transferred to Dalmahoy Camp 123

**30 December 1946 / 1 January 1947** – English Inspector’s Report. Strength 948. 45 pow pupils in 5 classes at all sites + a number studying privately.

Commandant: Lt Col H Lawton Camp leader (Lagersprecher): Willi Kiel (as before).

**15/18 February 1947** – Re-education report. Strength 2 officers, 636 OR.

The Commandant was co-operative, but did not actively promote re-education.

A new interpreter: S/Sgt Morgan. A new deputy C/L: Uffz Jacoby (B) – “*fairly young and highly intelligent.”*

Simplified screening figures were given – A 21; B 613; C 4. 41 appeals had been made against political grades, (the better the grade, the sooner repatriated in theory) – 26 had been allowed. 206 pows repatriated to date.

Morale had taken a dip as repatriations had slowed down. 30-35% of pows were ‘youth’ (under-25), but were not seen to be a problem. Older pows were largely politically apathetic.

The standard re-education list of activities was given. Slight improvements were noted – 3 newspaper titles received, 600 books, 1 lecturer every two months, YMCA and Gaumont British films received.

No education classes recorded for the main camp.

Entertainment – 10 member orchestra giving regular concerts at main and hostels. Occasional variety shows.

**7/10 July 1947** – Re-education Survey. Strength 2 officers; 586 OR.

Commandant: Major Lawton Camp leader: Uffz Anton Jokobi. (Was deputy).

Interpreter: 2/Lt Morgan. (Previously listed as S/Sgt) Deputy C/L: Uffz E Neumann

German M.O.: Dr Arno Bachert

Simplified screening – A 6; B 582. 310 pows repatriated to date.

Morale was regarded as ‘good.’ All pows were employed and conditions were satisfactory. The Commandant did not promote re-education, but was concerned with pow welfare and other activities such as sport. Negative factors were; news from home, especially in the Russian zone, and isolation of the camp. The report did not say so, but I would imagine the major factor was very slow repatriations – only 104 further pows had been repatriated in 5 months.

The standard list of re-education activities showed some improvement:

Newspapers – ‘Normal’ supplies of British and German papers.

Library – a good selection of 800 books.

Lectures – monthly; attendance 30% in main and 50% at hostels.

Discussion groups – weekly in main camp.

Films – Main camp YMCA and ‘Travelling Films’ with a 6d charge.

Wireless – Excellent in main. Hostels had smaller, but adequate sets.

Camp magazine - *Der Zeitspiegel Deutsche Lagerzeitung Camp 67* (Mirror on the Times….). (A different name was used at a different time – ‘*Stacheldraht’* – ‘Barbed Wire’). 200 copies fortnightly with 8 pages.

Press review – Compiled weekly for main and hostels.

Information room – a room was used for reading and discussions. Exhibition materials were requested from COGA.

Other activities –

Religion – Protestant padre; Kurt Lenz, held a weekly service with 10% attending + Bible classes – he visited Cairnfield fortnightly and Nethybridge monthly. A RC padre; Nitsch, from Camp 109 visited regularly. Pows were able to visit local churches.

Education – only a small French class at main.

Entertainment – The theatre group had closed due to repatriations. There was an 8 member orchestra and 12 member choir.

**21 August 1947** - Elgin Sheriff Court, Record of Fatal Accidents – *“Alfred Birner, B206381, German prisoner of war, 67th Prisoner of War Camp, Sandyhillock, Knockando Parish, Morayshire, died 21 Aug 1947 as a result of injuries sustained falling off the back of an army motor lorry”,* (National Records of Scotland, Ref SC26/28/1947/3). Later reinterred at Cannock Chase German Military Cemetery (forename listed as Albert).

**8/10 September 1947** – English Inspector’s Report. Strength 1367. 39 pupils in 3 classes.

**20-23 October 1947** – Re-education Survey. Strength – 2 officers; 1112 OR.

Camp leader Jacobi – aged 36, soon to be repatriated.

A new Deputy C/L - Uffz Gűnter Brabender (B), aged 35, spoke French and English.

Morale was recorded as ‘sound,’ especially with increased speed of repatriations. News from the Russian zone was upsetting for many pows. The isolated location of the camp did not seem to have much effect. 40% were ‘youth’ but that was not seen to present “*unusual difficulties*.”

There was a reduction of re-education activities mainly due to repatriations. The situation with films was very poor – the projector in main camp had broken down a month earlier and many of the hostels were not able to show films as they had no (or reduced) electric supply. Discussion groups and press reviews had ended. COGA had not sent any exhibition materials for the Information Room.

There were no general education classes.

Entertainment – football, table-tennis, chess, cards, etc. Frequent football matches against local teams.

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

**24-27 January 1948** – English Inspector’s Report. Strength 1504. 25 pupils in 3 classes at all sites.

**15/17 March 1948** - English Inspector’s Report. Strength 664. 6 pupils in 1 class at main.

A new camp leader; Gunther Pirsig.

Known Camp Commandants:

1945/6 - Major O Murray-Lyon M.C. Royal Artillery / Pioneer Corps.

1946/7 - Lt.Col. H. Lawton, M.B.E.

**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 | 9/1945 | 8/1946 | 1/1947 | 2/1947 | 7/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 |
| Main |  |  | I | 498 | 354 | 269 (1) | 322 (2) | 800 | 585 | 322 | 458 |
| Dallas |  |  | I | 46 | 29 |  |  | 70 | 50 | 22 | 15 |
| Fochabers |  |  | I | 67 | 60 |  |  | 70 | 58 | 29 |  |
| Logie |  |  | I | 67 | 60 |  |  |  | 49 | 43 | 18 |
| Cairnfield |  |  | 150 G | 150 | 146 | 123 | 90 | 170 | 144 | 67 | 15 |
| Nethybridge |  |  | 128 G | 158 | 155 | 93 | 68 | 70 | 59 | 120 | 40 |
| Boyndie |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 70 | 68 |  |  |
| Fearn |  |  |  |  | With C109 | | | | | 466 |  |
| Billets |  |  |  | 158 | 134 | 133 | 105 | ? | 101 | 190 | 118 |
| Total | ? | ? | ? | 1148 | 948 | 638 | 588 | 1367 | 1114 | 1504 | 664 |

G = German I = Italian (1) + 20 “*sundry*” – probably in hospital or prison. (2) + 3 in hospital

**After the camp:** A poultry farm was located on the site. Now Speyside Camping and Caravanning Site.

The site as it is today - <https://repatriatedlandscape.org/pow-sites-in-scotland/pow-camp-67-sandy-hillock/>

**Further information:**

National Archives FO 939/148 – 67 Working Camp, Sandy Hillock Camp, Craigellachie, Banffshire. Dated 1945-1948. Used above.

Canmore - [http://canmore.org.uk/site/272620](https://canmore.org.uk/site/272620)

The Imperial War Museum has a copy of the magazine dated May 1947. Ref LBY E.J. 450.

Vertical air photograph (106G/Scot/UK169, 2068, flown 26 August 1946)

**Hostels –**

**Boyndie**

Defence of Britain Project records a prisoner of war camp, for German and Italian prisoners, at the RAF Banff, Boyndie airfield. Like most airfield sites there are many possible locations – centre of airfield NJ 618 641.

Almost certainly linked to a different main camp before these entries.

**10/1947** – Hostel leader: Uffz Walter Burgert (B), age 27, “*makes the best of what little talent he has at his disposal. He is also good at organising sport, his team playing regularly against Banff and MacDuff.*”

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9/1945 | 8/1946 | 1/1947 | 2/1947 | 7/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 |
| Boyndie |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 70 | 68 |  |  |

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| **Cairnfield** **House**, Buckie. Mansion house built in 1799-1804. NJ 414 624.  Memories – “*I can remember from about 1943* [Unlikely to be correct date] *on when there were German POW's in the house. Around the grass in front of the house was barbed wire, only about three feet high, and the prisoners would walk round about it usually in twos like animals in a zoo. Among the trees were nissen huts for the soldiers who acted as the guards. You will see some of the names of POw's carved on the trees. Names were also found on the wall of the snooker room down in the basement*.”  **7-8/1945** – Hostel leader; Fwl. Arndt (C) – it was recommended that he be removed as soon as possible. 150 pows had recently been transferred from Compound D at Comrie Camp 21. They expressed their preference for this hostel rather than the main camp at Comrie.  Two large dining rooms in the house were used for classes. |  |
| Cairnfield House in the 1950’s |

**2/1947** – Hostel leader; Uffz Johann Thoenniges (B) – “*fairly keen and efficient, but dull.”* Hostel only showed films from ‘Travelling Films’ due to low voltage in the camp. (Generator?) The pows had to pay 6d to see films.

**10/1947** – same hostel leader, aged 41, “*runs a good hostel but has an uphill job combating bad light facilities*.”

A high number of ‘youth’ pows were giving, “*an element of restiveness*.”

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9/1945 | 8/1946 | 1/1947 | 2/1947 | 7/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 |
| Cairnfield |  |  | 150 G | 150 | 146 | 123 | 90 | 170 | 144 | 67 | 15 |



**Dallas** (Huts) NJ 118 501.

**1943 –** listed with Italian pows.

**1945** – A German hostel

**7/1946** – Hostel leader; O.Fwl Altsberger (B). No electric supply. No wireless.

**10/1947** – Hostel leader; Gefr Herbert Mertens (B), aged 22, “*is satisfactory despite his youth. He has to fight against bad lighting”* (still no electric supply).

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9/1945 | 8/1946 | 1/1947 | 2/1947 | 7/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 |
| Dallas |  |  | I | 46 | 29 |  |  | 70 | 50 | 22 | 15 |

**Fearn** (Tain) – 110 miles from the main camp. Transferred from Brahan Camp 109.

**1/1948** – Officer i/c – Captain Shaw. It was expected that this hostel would soon close and its remaining pows be sent to the main camp.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9/1945 | 8/1946 | 1/1947 | 2/1947 | 7/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 |
| Fearn |  | With C109 | | | | | | | | 466 |  |

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| **Fochabers** (Huts). NGR NJ 348 587 (shown as Youth Hostel on 1959 map).  Memories – “*The only guard for over 1,000 internees* [pows] *was one lonely sergeant who dutifully closed the camp gates at night, which for the remaining period of time remained open, allowing the local populace to enjoy the best food in town.*  *When Victory Parades were organised, the ones who contributed most freely and generously to further greater Spitfire production, etc, were the self-same Italian POW's. Such was their contribution to Mussolini's efforts!”*  <https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/12/a2970812.shtml>  **1943 –** Listed for Italian pows.  **7/1946** – Hostel leader; Kimmel (B).  **10/1947** – Hostel leader; Uffz Fritz Sautter (B+), aged 33, “*is colourless and does little for re-education*.” Insufficient current to show films since July. |  |
|  | Ordnance Survey 1959 |

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9/1945 | 8/1946 | 1/1947 | 2/1947 | 7/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 |
| Fochabers |  |  | It | 67 | 60 |  |  | 70 | 58 | 29 |  |

**Logie** (Dunphail) (Huts) Postcode IV36.

**7/1946** – Hostel leader; Sold Streith (B). No electric supply.

No explanation for gap in records – probably attached to another camp.

**10/1947** – Hostel leader; Wm Max Moehring (B+), aged 28, “*is somewhat slack on re-education on account of bad lighting. He is verry good on the sports side and organises matches against local teams.*”

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9/1945 | 8/1946 | 1/1947 | 2/1947 | 7/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 |
| Logie |  |  | I | 67 | 60 |  |  |  | 49 | 43 | 18 |

**Nethybridge** (Nethy Bridge, Grantown) (Huts – “*a log cabin camp*.”) At the Canadian Forestry Camp – School Wood.

Memories place Italian pows at the site – so probably open before 9/1945 attached to a different main camp. Italian pows recorded as working at ‘Dell Tree Nursery.’

German pows working at various saw mills.

**8/1946** – Hostel leader; St.Fwl Wirsching (A). The pow padre had turned the Canadian Lumberer’s concert hall into a church and erected an altar on the stage.

**2/1947** – Hostel leader; S/Fw Karl Guttmann (B) – “*good disciplinarian*.” French classes available.

**10/1947** – same hostel leader, aged 37 – “*good and keeps morale high chiefly by means of fostering sports*.” Hostel showed films from YMCA and ‘Travelling Films’

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9/1945 | 8/1946 | 1/1947 | 2/1947 | 7/1947 | 9/1947 | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1048 |
| Nethybridge |  |  | 128 G | 158 | 155 | 93 | 68 | 70 | 59 | 120 | 40 |