**Camp 75** **– Northhill Camp, Laurencekirk, Kincardineshire**

Included in the 1945 ICRC camp list – Labour Camp. 75. North Hill Camp, Laurencekirk, Kincardine.

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| **1947 Camp List** |
| 75(G.W.C.) | North Hill Camp, Laurencekirk, Kincardineshire | Sc | Priswar, Laurencekirk | Laurencekirk 128 | Laurencekirk | Lt.Col.T.Reilly, O.B.E. M.C. | 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 |
|  |  | 75 / 76 | North Hill Camp, Laurencekirk | Kincardinshire |  | German Working Camp | Scotland |

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| **Location:** NGR NO 705 746**Before the camp:** Part of a much larger Northhill Plantation than shown on the 1959 map.**Pow Camp:** Listed as an Italian working camp / labour battalion to at least 1945, then a German working camp. Standard layout to the camp with a main pow compound, and guards’ huts and offices at front alongside the road.**14 November 1942** - There was an International Red Cross inspection - Italian prisoners, capacity 750.**1943** - Italian list of camps recorded 2 attached hostels for pows at Banchory and Ricarton.**May 1944 and November 1944 -** The camp was listed as an Italian Labour Battalion under the Scottish Command area, (WO 32/10737). **November 1944** - An unusual fatal accident was recorded. On 11 November 1944 – *“John Lindsay, retired farmer, Nether Wyndings, Fetteresso Parish, Stonehaven, and Enzo Tanzi, prisoner of war, No 41033, Italian Prisoner of War Camp, North Hill, Laurencekirk, both died 11 Nov 1944 as a result of an aeroplane colliding with them when it crashed into the field they were working in*.” (Stonehaven Sheriff Court record dated 1 May 1945, held at National Records for Scotland SC5/29/1945/1)Enzo Tanzi was later re-interred at .Brookwood Military Cemetery. |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1959 |

As a result of the ‘accident’ the pilot, Sub-Lieut Peter King, was sentenced to four months imprisonment for culpable homicide. It was found that he was flying too low, repeatedly and in a culpable and reckless manner.

**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.

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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. |

**11/12 August 1945** – Mr James Grant, an English Inspector, visited the camp. By this time, it was listed as a German pow camp, though some Italian pows awaiting repatriation were held in hostels.

He stated that little re-education work had commenced – there was no library, films or teaching materials for English. Two German pows had been identified to teach English.

There was a new (unnamed) Commandant, who; “*seems somewhat young, but is quietly enthusiastic*…”

The interpreter officer was described as; “*too young and diffident.”* There was a comment that; “*His very Scottish name (Hamilton) has been recently acquired*” – I think Mr Grant meant that the IO was of German origin and had changed his name.

The German Camp Leader, W Papon, was seen as; “*a ‘live man’ with patience and a sense of humour.”*

**30 December 1945** – Mr Grant gave a brief report on a visit.

*“This is a most contented camp. The musical, theatrical and artistic sides are well catered for and encouraged.”* Nigg hostel had been recently taken over.

**9 May 1946** – 20 year old pow Otto Schmidt was killed by a train near Blackiemuir Bridge when he was making his way back from a sawmill where he was working. He was buried at Laurencekirk Cemetery and later reinterred at Cannock Chase German Military Cemetery.

**24/25 July 1946** – Mr Grant returned. Total strength 1301. Commandant: Lt.Col. Reilly. There were two English classes, and another 640 ‘private students’.

**9/11 May 1947** – Re-education Survey carried out by W R Lang. Strength: 2 officers; 1168 O.R.

Commandant: Lt Col Reilly. Camp Leader: Ofw.Papon (B)

Interpreter: Sgt Warner (or Werner - Black Watch) Deputy C/L: Ofw.Weber (C)

 German M.O. O/Arzt Bachmeyer.

The Interpreter had been in place for just 10 days, there had not been one for 6 months. He was regarded as; “*highly intelligent, helpful and likely to arouse interest in re-education.”*

Political Screening: A – 4 B – 835 C – 322 Unscreened - 9 This is a high number of C / Black category pows in comparison to many camps, though many were due to be regraded. Many of the “*ex-C*” pows (in other words previously regraded) had recently been transferred from Watten Camp 165.

The German Camp Staff were not highly regarded by the visitor who found them to be apathetic. He recommended changes.

Camp leader Papon was seen as competent, but not leading re-education. The deputy, Weber was described as competent, but dull.

529 pows were ‘youth’ (under-25), but this was not seen as a problem.

Re-education activities were taking place, but lacked leadership except at Kinnell hostel. The standard list of re-education activities was given:

Wochenpost and Ausblick – separate report.

Newspapers – Just 1 copy of The Times and Guardian received at the camp and each hostel. Only a few German and Swiss papers received.

Library – adequate

Lectures – regular.

Discussion groups – Lacking interest in the main camp, one group restarting. Kinnell – active group. Nigg – no group.

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| Films – Regular in the main camp. Kinnell infrequent due to distance. Nigg – poor interest.Wireless – good in the main camp and hostels with radios and loudspeakers.Camp magazine – none. Possibly in the future.English instruction – separate reportInformation room – none.Other camp activities:Religion – Regular services with protestant and catholic padres in the main camp and hostels. Some pows attended services in local churches.Education – Small classes for English, French, law and typing – mainly at Kinnell hostel.Entertainments – The orchestra had been reformed and planned to visit the hostels. Some dramatic performances had been held up to Easter, then light entertainment. Table tennis and chess were popular at all the sites.**12 May 1947** – Mr James Grant’s English Inspection Report. Strength increased in a few days to 1315. There were only 2 small classes + 100 pows conducting ‘private studies’.**13-14 May 1947** - Paul Bondy, a German-speaking refugee gave lectures at the main camp and 1 hostel. He recorded a main camp complement of 694. |  |
| Cigarette case made by a pow. Reports ignored such activities – mini-enterprises to raise money.<https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/past-times/1698328/mearns-pow-camp-the-lifelong-bonds-and-many-ghosts-of-northill/> |

**11-15 August 1947** – Re-education Survey Report by S Denham Jacobs. Strength: 1 officer; 927 OR.

There was a new commandant - Lt Col R G E Minchin.

The previous commandant had received generally positive comments in earlier reports – however, this report painted a different picture; *“The Commandant is much more alive to the need for re-education among Ps/W than was his predecessor and has already exercised considerable influence for the better*.” Later in the report it was noted that the previous commandant had been popular and had a lax attitude towards discipline.

The Interpreter was still highly regarded.

Despite previous recommendations, the two senior German leaders had not been replaced – and were still seen as no more than competent. This comment may be down to the often excessive zeal which inspectors placed on re-education – the camp authorities often had other issues in mind such as discipline and work effort.

A new Study Leader, Werner Kloos, PhD was regarded as outstanding. He had studied at Cambridge and London and had been Director of the Kunstmuseum in Hamburg. It was also noted that he had joined the Nazi Party in 1934 and had become Untersturmfűhrer in the Ahnenerbe SS – this was excused by the visitor with the comment; “*an honorary post rather than from political zeal*”. The Ahnenerbe SS were an offshoot of the SS devoted to promoting the Nazi idea that Aryans were biologically and mentally superior to other races.

The camp strength was expected to rise to 2000 by the end of August as other camps were closed down and pows transferred here. 300 pows had arrived from Flaxley Green Camp 175 in Staffordshire.

830 pows had been repatriated to date.

Morale was seen as ‘*disturbed*’ due to large intakes of pows – especially from Camp 175 where morale had been low. The main causes of low morale were bad news from home and slow repatriation. Political progress was seen as being slow to improve.

Apart from Kinnell and Nigg hostels, which were regarded as active camps, the other sites were “*dull and difficult to rouse.*” Standard re-education activities:

Wochenpost and Ausblick – separate report.

Newspapers – the three new hostels had not received any newspapers.

Library – about 1000 books but many, “*old and dull”.*

Lectures – regular.

Discussion groups – only at Kinnell and Nigg.

Films – Regular in the main camp. Elsewhere - “*Satisfactory as conditions allow.*”

Wireless – good in main and hostels with radios and loudspeakers.

Camp magazine – none.

English instruction – separate report

Other Camp Activities.

Religion – Interest was not great. The RC Padre, Gomolla, was seen as a being a positive influence. Some pows attended services in local churches and there was regular contact with Rev Mr McMurray of Tannadice, and the RC Priest at Inverbervie.

Education – only at Nigg where science lectures were given.

Entertainment – there was a small orchestra which sometimes visited the hostels.

Contact had been made with Mr Thornton MP for Kincardineshire, but no particular outside activities were listed.

**29 September – 2 October 1947** – Re-educational Survey by H McCarthy-Main. Strength; 1 officer; 2318 OR.

Commandant: Lt Col R G E Minchin Camp Leader: Ofw.Papon (B+)

Interpreter: Sgt Werner (Black Watch) Deputy C/L: Ofw.Weber, Bernhard

 German M.O. O/Arzt Bachmayr, Franz.

The study leader, Werner Kloos, mentioned in the last report was; “*’frozen’ under automatic arrest.”* The automatic arrest warrant was issued to investigate his SS record - very few members of the Ahnenerbe SS were prosecuted. (A small biography - <https://second.wiki/wiki/werner_kloos> ).

Morale was regarded as being good in the smaller hostels, but not good in the main and larger sites.

The standard list of re-education activities was given, it varied little from previous reports other than a camp magazine ~ (“Nordhöhe”) had been started.

A drama group had started in addition to the orchestra. Sport was actively pursued.

Some outside contacts were trying to be established with Aberdeen Council and University.

**22 October 1947** – English Inspector’s Report by A Robinson. Strength 2463 in Mian + 4 hostels and 2 satellite camps.

The pows were described as Germans and ‘Jugoslavs.’

There were just 2 small English classes with a total of 20 pow pupils in the main camp. Pows stated that the population at Laurencekirk were extremely reserved and there was very little cultural or other contact.

**10/13 November 1947** – Survey of re-education by H McCarthy-Main. Strength 1 officer; 1776 OR.

No change in senior personnel since the last report.

Morale was reported as “*improving*” overall. The pows sent from camps in the south had settled down. 40% of the pows were ‘youth’, but this was not seen as a problem.

Standard list of re-education activities:

Newspapers – supply improved and all sites receiving English newspapers. German papers were received privately.

Library – adequate.

Lectures – regular.

Discussion groups – being held at all sites.

Films – YMCA and Travelling Films Ltd fortnightly at all sites except Edzell, which had YMCA films and were able to visit neighbouring RAF cinema to see films.

****Wireless – adequate at all sites.

Camp magazine – first copy had been published.

English instruction – Classes started and many studied privately.

Press review – taking place at all sites.

Other activities:

Religion – RC Priest Gomolla and Protestant padre Wuerster. “*Religious fervour is weak.”*

Education – some classes hoped to start.

Entertainment – Orchestra and theatre group in the main camp, also visiting hostels. Football was actively pursued with inter-hostel matches + games against local RAF units and local teams. Table tennis and other sports available.

Visits to Aberdeen were being developed, e.g. to the museum.

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

**29/31 December 1947** – H McCarthy-Main returned for another re-education survey. Strength 2 officers, 1003 OR.

No change to senior personnel. 1413 pows repatriated to date.

Morale was seen as good, mainly due to increased speed of repatriations, but also co-operation between German and British personnel, discipline, entertainment and seasonal / Christmas factors. Negative aspects were relationships with local farmers and letters from the Russian zone – 30% of the pows had homes in the Russian zone. Political views were believed to have improved and it was noted that there was a definite anti-communist feeling.

Activities were largely as in the previous report with a few notes about the affect of repatriations on some.

No further reports are included in the file (FO 939/155).

**January 1948** Rosemount hostel was transferred to Balharry Camp 3/63 – it is likely that the main camp 75 therefore closed at around this time

Camp commandants:

1942 - ?

1945 - 1947 Lt Col Thomas Reilly, O.B.E. M.C. (I think he was from the Royal Artillery).

1947 – 1948 Lt Col R G E Minchin from the Worcester Regiment.

**Camp numbers:**

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|  | Open |  |  | With other camps |  |  | Unknown |  |  | Not listed / not open |

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 7/46 | 5/47(1) | 5/47(2) | 8/47 | 10/47 (1) | 10/47 (2) | 11/47 | 12/47 |
| Northhill |  | + | 670 | 681 | 719 | 346 | 734 | 734 | 663 | 557 |
| Banchory |  | + | 69 |  |  |  | 36 | 37 | 33 |  |
| Rickarton |  | + | 61 |  |  | 28 | 63 | 60 | 53 |  |
| Rosemount |  |  | 229 |  |  | 45 | 525 | 616 | 367 | 356 |
| Nigg |  |  | 174 | 81 | 81 | 74 | 87 | 89 | 130 | 92 |
| Kinnell |  |  | Camp 275 | 313 | 418 | 227 | 657 | 704 | 335 |  |
| Tannadice |  | With Camp 3/63 | 37 |  |  |  |  |
| Edzell |  |  |  |  |  |  | 120 | 133 | 108 |  |
| Hospital/Other(1) |  |  |  | 13 |  | 92 | 6 |  |  |  |
| Billetees |  |  | 98 | 82 | 85 | 79 | 91 | 90 | 88 |  |
| Total | 750 capacity | + | 1301 | 1170 | 1315\* | 928 | 2319 | 2463 | 1777 | 1005 |

+ camp / hostels listed, numbers unknown. \* Numbers do not tally – presumably 12 ‘missing’ still in hospital

(1) other includes pows detached to serve elsewhere on a temporary basis. Some pows were recorded as working at Stracatho Hospital.

**After the camp**: For a while the camp housed Ukrainians under the European Voluntary Workers scheme. It is now a small housing estate.

**Further information:**

National Archives FO 939/155 – 75 Working Camp, North Hill Camp, Laurence Kirk, Kincardineshire. Dated 1945-1947. Used above.

Memories, contacts and photos - [https://www.laurencekirkab30.co.uk/](https://www.laurencekirkab30.co.uk/willi-otto-karl-dorow-prisoner-of-war-at-camp-75-northhill-camp-laurencekirk/)

**HOSTELS**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **Banchory.** 45 miles from the main camp. Hutted. NGR NO 702 954*“During the war, Nissen huts were erected on land adjoining the hotel and used to house Italian prisoners of war. Long after the war, these huts remained and were used as workshops and offices.”* - from Banchory Lodge Past and Present by W Stewart Wilson.**1943** – listed as a hostel for Italian pows.**July 1946** – hostel for German pows.**July 1946 to October 1947** – no entries for this camp in the reports for Camp 75. Possibly linked to another camp, but a comment in October makes it sound as if the camp had been temporarily closed.**October 1947** – Hostel leader; Hwm.Mueller, Willi (B-); age 30, “*a Saarlander with no political affinities, is intelligent and alert. He has been C/L since the opening of the hostel only 2 weeks ago. He should prove to be good.”* Same HL in November.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 7/46 | 5/47(1) | 5/47(2) | 8/47 | 10/47 (1) | 10/47 (2) | 11/47 | 12/47 |
| Banchory |  | + | 69 |  |  |  | 36 | 37 | 33 |  |

 |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1959 |

**Edzell**

Probably linked to another camp prior to October 1947.

**October 1947** – Hostel leader; Kadet Dorn, Bernhard (B-); age 35; “*a school teacher is undoubtedly the best Camp leader. I shall arrange for his removal to a larger hostel at the earliest possible opportunity.”* Classes were held in a hut with no heating. Same HL in November.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 7/46 | 5/47(1) | 5/47(2) | 8/47 | 10/47 (1) | 10/47 (2) | 11/47 | 12/47 |
| Edzell |  |  |  |  |  |  | 120 | 133 | 108 |  |

**Kinnell.** Previously Camp 275.

**31 January 1947** – Kinnell Camp 275 disbanded as a unit and the site became a hostel for Northhill.

**May 1947** – Hostel leader Ofw.Leinart (B+). Described as “*young but intelligent.*” He was developing re-education activities and was recommended to attend the special training course at Wilton Park. Morale overall was described as ‘fair.’

**May 1947** - Large intake of additional pows.

**August 1947** – Hostel leader Steibach (B) – Had been deputy leader when this was Camp 275 – “*excellent from every point of view, and has the most active hostel.”*

**October 1947** – Site listed as a satellite camp rather than a hostel. OC Captain Robertson. Hostel leader; Uffz. Steinbach, Hermann (B), aged 39. Same HL in November 1947

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 7/46 | 5/47(1) | 5/47(2) | 8/47 | 10/47 (1) | 10/47 (2) | 11/47 | 12/47 |
| Kinnell |  |  | Camp 275 | 313 | 418 | 227 | 657 | 704 | 335 |  |

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| **Nigg.** c40 miles from the main camp. Hutted. On the outskirts of Aberdeen. NGR - NJ 9545 0342“*Site of camp for an anti-aircraft battery on the south side of Tullos Hill, converted and used as a German Prisoner of War camp from 1945-48. Aerial photographs taken in 1946 and 1948 show the camp before its demolition…. Karl Roth, a former PoW who resided at the camp from 1945-8. He remembered fondly the people of Torry for whom he gardened and remembered the camp vividly. It was cold and windy on the top of the hill and the huts had basic beds and one heater. Food was plain but sufficient and the football games with the locals*.”<https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/smrpub/master/detail.aspx?refno=NJ90SE0039>The A-A site was called Peterseat after a local farm. It was built to protect Aberdeen. *“The camp itself was an adaptation of the HAA battery. It was of course surrounded by a barbed wire fence and was composed, internally, of a number of Nissen huts, as well as a football field. Each hut had a stove inside. The prisoners did work in the local communities as well as playing football against the local amateur teams. The camp remained in use until 1947\* when it was sold to a local farmer, one Herbert Anderson.”* Archaeology survey - <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/peterseat_2016/>\*One pow, Karl Roth, stated that he left on 10 January 1948.**December 1945** – had recently been “*taken over”*. |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1964 |

**May 1947** – Hostel leader; B/Maat Althoff (B). He was regarded as a “*bad influence on the hostel.”* Recommended that he be replaced by the hostel leader from Kinnell. Poor overall morale.

**August 1947** – same HL – “*has improved considerably thanks to the direct influence of the C.O. He saw a good deal of the world before the war…”***October 1947** – same HL “…*Aberdonians are very friendly towards Ps/W and most members of Nigg hostel have civilian contacts there.”*

**November 1947** – Hostel leader O.Fw Martens, Georg (B)

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 7/46 | 5/47(1) | 5/47(2) | 8/47 | 10/47 (1) | 10/47 (2) | 11/47 | 12/47 |
| Nigg |  |  | 174 | 81 | 81 | 74 | 87 | 89 | 130 | 92 |

**Rickarton.** c40 miles from the main camp. Hutted.

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

**July 1946** – hostel for German pows.

**May 1947** – no entries for this camp in the reports for Camp 75. Temporarily closed or possibly linked to another camp?

**August 1947** – Hostel leader; Josef Lehner (B); “*….new. He is conscientious but not outstanding; quite good enough for this small hostel*.” No electric supply. Oil lamps used.

**October 1947** – Same HL, aged 32; “*keeps excellent morale at his hostel but is ignorant of re-education.”* Same HL November.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 7/46 | 5/47(1) | 5/47(2) | 8/47 | 10/47 (1) | 10/47 (2) | 11/47 | 12/47 |
| Rickarton |  | + | 61 |  |  | 28 | 63 | 60 | 53 |  |

**Rosemount (Hillside).** 12 miles from main camp. Hutted. In the Rosemount / Hillside area north of Montrose. NGR of House: NO 699 616

Rosemount House HER: “*In 1929 it was requisitioned by the War Department and later housed a contingent of Polish Armed Forces and also German prisoners of war. The house was demolished in 1982.”* <https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/smrpub/master/detail.aspx?Authority=ANG&refno=NO66SE0157>

**May 1947** – no entries for this camp in the reports for Camp 75. Possibly linked to another camp?

**July 1947** – “*the men were mostly interested in French since they came, almost all, from the French Zone*.” Most pows had previously been held in the USA.

**August 1947** – Hostel leader; Rudolf Nass (B) – New appointment; “*a steady, elderly man, not highly intelligent, but with considerable common sense*.”

**25 August 1947** – article in the Dundee Courier recorded that 34-year-old Kurt Fallert, (recorded as Karl, not Kurt, at German Cemetery) from the Rosemount Camp was drowned after bathing at the Annat bank near the river mouth. He had been making his way back to shore when he had been trapped by the tide. He is buried in the German Military Cemetery at Cannock Chase.

**October 1947** – Site now listed as a satellite camp, rather than as a hostel. OC Captain W S Grant. Same HL was not appreciated by the visitor – “*age 46, is nervous, a ‘gasbag’ and entertains a permanent ‘grouse’ about petty matters. He will be replaced immediately after the harvest.”* He was still in place November 1947 and was considered to have improved. Same HL in December 1947.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 7/46 | 5/47(1) | 5/47(2) | 8/47 | 10/47 (1) | 10/47 (2) | 11/47 | 12/47 |
| Rosemount |  |  | 229 |  |  | 45 | 525 | 616 | 367 | 356 |

**January 1948** – listed as a hostel for Balhary Camp 3/63 with pows awaiting repatriation / one further entry for March 1948.

**Tannadice**

**1943 – 1947** – attached to Balhary Camp 3/63 (see for map).

**August 1947** – Hostel leader Mueller, W (B-); “*a recent appointment, doing his best to live down his Nazi background. He is well able to handle this small, remote hostel*.”

No electric supply.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 7/46 | 5/47(1) | 5/47(2) | 8/47 | 10/47 (1) | 10/47 (2) | 11/47 | 12/47 |
| Tannadice |  | With Camp 3/63 | 37 |  |  |  |  |