**Camp 80** **- Horbling Camp, Sleaford, Lincolnshire**

Included in the 1945 ICRC camp list – Labour Camp. 80. Horbling Camp, Sleaford, Lincs.

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| **1947 Camp List** | | | | | | | |
| 80(G.W.C.) | Horbling Camp, Sleaford, Lincs | N. | Priswar, Sleaford | Billingborough 264 | Sleaford | Lt.Col.G.Stevenson. | 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 |
| TF 1210 3499 | 130 | 80 | Horbling, Sleaford | Lincolnshire | 4 | German Working Camp | STANDARD type. Site occupied by housing |

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| **Location:** About 21 km E of Grantham.  **Before the camp:** Farmland  **Pow camp:** Listed as an Italian working camp / labour battalion, then German pows. The camp shows a standard layout with a pow compound, and guards’ huts and offices at the front alongside the road.  **1942/1943** - Opened for Italian pows.  Extracts from an article by Teresa Pennel regarding Italian pow Domenico de Falco: *“At first, the PoW ‘camp’ at Horbling, as with Moorby, was only a grass field, on which bell tents were pitched. But within three months the prisoners, with the aid of civilian contractors, had constructed a permanent site, with living quarters, hospital facilities and recreational amenities, which included a concert hall. Mr de Falco himself remembers performing in several productions…*  *Life in a PoW camp seems to have been a mixture of hard work and play. Parties of men were sent out to clear ditches and harvest wheat and corn, working up to 12 hours a day in the summer, at a wage of 8s* [8 shillings] *a week, although very lucrative overtime money was paid by farmers ‘on the side.’…*  Mr de Falco was placed in a farm billet where security was extremely lax. “*Beds and mattresses for the PoWs who were billeted on farms were supplied by the government, which also provided ration books. In his turn, the farmer was expected to provide the prisoners with hot liquid refreshments during the day and, if required, with facilities for cooking a midday meal.”*  English cooking took some time to adjust to; “*’We were brought steamed pudding, but nobody fancied it, so we put it in the horses’ manger,’ he smiled, ‘but even they wouldn’t eat it’.”*  *After the Italian surrender in late 1943, Italians were given greater freedom. Mr de Falco visited the cinema* |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1956 |

*at Boston, there was a 10p.m. curfew, but this was often broken. He later settled to live in the UK*. From –‘Lincolnshire Life, November 1987.’

The pows would melt down half-crowns (2s/6d) and make them into rings – they wove baskets – and carved wood – all for sale. Murals were often painted – there was one at Stourton Home Farm, Great Sturton.

**May and November 1944** - The camp was listed as an Italian Labour Battalion under the Northern Command area, (+Pioneer Corps Groups), (WO 32/10737).

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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. |

**22 March 1945 –** PID Progress Report 57 stated that Camp 80 had become a German Labour Camp containing 900 pows transferred from Camp 18. Italian pows were placed in hostels and billets awaiting repatriation. (Ignored by PID).

**28 June 1945** – PID Progress Report 118 stated that a batch of 150 German pows had been sent to Horbling to be accommodated in a tented enclosure.

**29 June 1945** – PID Progress Report 121 stated that initial screening had been carried out and recommended that 83 Nazis be removed and replaced. (FO 939/383).

**7/8 July 1945** – English Inspector’s Report.

The inspector found the camp to be; “*the most interesting one I have ever visited*” due to its high average age. He gave a breakdown of the ages:

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| Under 20 | 21 to 30 | 31 to 40 | 41 to 50 | 51 | Total |
| 129 | 219 | 449 | 248 | 1 | 1046 |

66% aged over 30 was very high – “*The atmosphere in this camp is noticeably free from tension, which is due to the high average age.”* There were no comments on this age range in further reports.

English teaching was an issue as there was just one suitable teacher and he was due to be transferred.

150 men had newly arrived to assist with the harvest, and another 80 were due. No hostels were mentioned, but any holding Italians would have been ignored.

**29/30 November 1945** – English Inspector’s Report. Annoyingly short on detail.

An unnamed commandant was stated to be very popular and keenly interested in all activities. There were a number of teachers, but the report does not say how many or where they were based – there were several unnamed hostels. There was a shortage of teaching materials.

The Interpreter Officer caused concern, however he was, *“going to Germany shortly to the great relief of everybody concerned. He claims to have built up the education etc, by his own unaided efforts but that is scarcely credible*.”

A range of activities were taking place – “*choir practice, orchestra practice, play rehearsal, various classes, etc.”*

**12 April 1946** – arrival of 150 men from camps in the USA. They had low morale as they had been misinformed in the US that they were to be returned to Germany.

**6-7 July 1946** – Re-education and Progress report. Strength; 2 officers, 1809 Other Ranks.

Commandant: Lt Col Stevenson Camp Leader: S/Fw Sonntag (A)

2nd I/c: Major W H Tambling MBE Deputy C/L: O/Fw Erhard Saar (A)

Interpreter: S/Sgt H P Paisley German M.O.s: St/arzt Dr Ranft (C), U/arzt Dr Loogen (A).

The Commandant was absent. The 2nd i/c was a regular soldier, his objective was to “*get maximum work from PsW and he views re-education negatively*.”

S/Sgt Paisley was a German Jew, “*intelligent and diligent,’*” he was supportive of re-education, but overworked.

The camp leader “*makes neutral impression, but good at his work and just*.” The deputy was a “*more forceful personality and appears more influential*.”

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| Political screening for all sites: | A+ | A | B | C | C+ | Unscreened |
|  | 4 | 174 | 1311 | 227 | 1 | 80 |

166 of the C grade (Nazi) pows were in the main camp, but were not regarded as fanatical or having any influence. Many would later be upgraded.

Morale – “*PsW are contented and receptive to re-education*.” The pows from the USA appeared to have settled down.

20-25% were ‘youth’ – under-25, they were not regarded as a problem.

A good range of pows were involved in re-education. The standard list of re-education activities was given:

Wochenpost / Ausblick – 150 / 60 copies.

Newspapers – A range of British newspapers, except at N.Kyme and ‘Swineshead 1’. A range of German papers were received, but several hostels were not getting any. Swiss papers were infrequent.

Library – insufficient; e.g. just 8 books at Ewerby with 88 pows.

Lectures – regular, including hostels if transport and time allowed.

Discussion groups – 80-120 attended at main camp. Other groups at 2 hostels.

Films – German and British films. Hostels had shows every 3rd week.

Wireless – adequate, except at N.Kyme.

Camp Magazine - *Der Wegweiser* (The Guide). Held up due to lack of ink and paper.

Press review – regular, including at hostels.

English instruction – separate appendix.

Other camp activities –

Religion – 50% of RCs attended services / 20% of protestants. Weekly services were held, including at the hostels.

RC chaplain; San/Uffz Gruenewald (A) – “*Reported as devoted and unsparing worker*.”

Protestant chaplain; Lt Knodt (B+) – “*arrogant and uncooperiative*.” Recommended that he be watched.

Education – at main camp, classes for English, French, Spanish, history and book-keeping. The Spanish classes were held by a German who had learned the language while serving in the Kondor Legion.

Theatre – popular.

Music – Orchestra and choir.

**22/24 September 1946** – English Inspector’s report. Strength; 1892 in main, 6 hostels and billets. 122 pupils in 11 classes at all sites except North Kyme and Walcot.

**17/20 January 1947** – English Inspector’s report. Strength; 1764 in main, hostels and billets. 99 pupils in 11 classes at all sites except Walcot.

“*English teaching seems to be more flourishing here than at many other camps…. The camp has a happy atmosphere*.”

**23/25 January 1947** – Re-education Survey and Re/Screen staff. Strength; 2 officers, 1794 OR.

The Commandant and British staff were not supportive of re-education, but did not obstruct activities – similar to most camps.

A new Camp Leader: Stabsfw Fritz Berkmann (B); he had been the hostel leader at Hanthorpe. Aged 35, a regular soldier, showed some interest in re-education.

The deputy C/L was aged 49, and had served in both wars, “*a quiet, sensible individual who has postponed his repatriation until he can remove his wife and family from the Russian zone.*” I wonder if he ever managed to arrange that.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Political Screening: | A | B+ | B | B- | C | Unscreened |
|  | 8 | 86 | 1000 | 79 | 78 | 545 |

147 pows had appealed against their political grades – the better the grade, the sooner repatriated – in theory. It does not say, but in most camps the majority of appeals were upheld. 226 pows repatriated to date.

Morale was not high; it had improved when repatriations commenced, but dipped as the process was so slow. Many pows received bad news from Germany.

Youth pows caused some difficulties regarding discipline. There was no special provision for them.

The standard list of re-education activities was given, similar to before, noteworthy differences were;

Newspapers – 2 copies of ‘Woman’s Own’ magazine were on order, never seen this listed elsewhere.

Library still insufficient with just 560 books.

Discussion groups – 2 in main for social and political debates. All hostels had groups.

Other camp activities -

Religion – pows could attend local churches as well as camp services.

Education – reduced to history (20 pows), French (8) and literature (15). Very few classes at any of the hostels.

**25/28 April 1947** – English Inspector’s Report. Strength 1650. 107 pupils in 11 classes.

**14-17 October 1947** – Re-educational survey. Strength; 3 officers, 1426 OR.

The nature of the camp changed with the arrival of Ukrainian pows. They had served with the Germans in the Galicia Division, (Waffen-SS Division Galizien). The division was accused of major war crimes against civilians, but were not prosecuted in the UK. A small number of Germans were kept on at the main camp to perform administrative duties and train Ukrainian staff. The Ukrainians were largely ignored in the report.

Commandant: Major H S Armstrong Camp Leader: (German) Ofw P Schlimbach (A) / (Ukrainian) Ofw A Hawirko

Interpreter: S/Sgt H Indyk Deputy C/L: (Ukrainian) Ofw W Doluyka. German M.O.s: St/arzt Dr H Rauft (B-), U/arzt Dr F Loogen (A). Ukrainian 2/Lt B Rosdilskyj

The new commandant was said to be interested in re-education.

The new “*youngish”* camp leader had voluntarily deferred repatriation. He spoke English and French to interpreter standard. He actively supported re-education as time allowed.

Simplified screeing in place: A 3; B 515. 633 pows repatriated to date.

Morale was recorded as ‘*fairly good on the whole*.’ The Germans and Ukrainians got on well, but did not mix a great deal outside of working hours.

Re-education activities had stopped at the main camp. YMCA films continued to visit.

Religion – no resident priests, but services held by visitors.

Entertainment – The Ukrainians had started an orchestra, which intended to visit the German hostels. There was a good Ukrainian choir. A Ukrainian theatre group was being formed.

Unusual at this time – “*Lincolnshire Association Football teams are forbidden to play agaisnt PsW*.”

There were no further PID reports.

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

**25 November 1947** - in the House of Commons, *“Lord Willoughby de Eresby asked the Secretary of State for War what action has been taken to deal with the complaints sent to him by the Parish Council and Women's Institute of Horbling, Lincs., about the behaviour after dark of Ukrainian prisoners of war from the Horbling prisoner of war camp.*

*Mr. Shinwell - These complaints are being investigated and I will write to the hon. Member when the investigations have been completed.”* (House of Commons, **25 November 1947, Vol 444 – unfortunately Hansard does not tell us the results of the investigation).**

The camp continued into 1948.

Known Camp Commandants:

c.1946-7 Lieutenant Colonel George Stevenson from the Royal Tank Corps.

1947 – 1948 Major H S Armstrong

**Numbers of pows**

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

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942/3 | 1945 | 7/1946 | 9/1946 | 1/1947 | 4/1947 | 10/1947 |
| Main |  | 1046 | 868 | 1015 | 950 | 1000 | 911 U / 14 G |
| St Lamberts Hall |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Hanthorpe |  |  | 100 | 98 | 90 | 90 | 87 G |
| Ewerby |  |  | 88 | 94 | 90 |  |  |
| N. Kyme |  | With C138 | 68 | 69 | 60 |  |  |
| Sleaford |  |  | 279 | 303 | 260 | 260 |  |
| Swineshead 1 |  |  | 51 | 50 | 45 | 45 |  |
| Swineshead 2 |  |  | 52 |
| Walcot |  | With C138 | 57 | 60 | 55 | 50 | 49 G |
| Billetees |  |  | 248 | 263 | 246 | 200 | 368 G |
| TOTALS |  |  | 1811 | 1892 | 1796 | 1650 | 1429 |

U = Ukrainian / G = German

**After the camp:** Used for a while as a hostel to house displaced persons. Now part residential / school grounds; part field.

**Further information:**

National Archives FO 939/160 80 Working Camp, Horbling Camp, Sleaford, Lincolnshire. Dated 1947 – used above.

The Imperial War Museum has a copy of the magazine dated December 1946, Ref LBY E.J. 435. The German Federal Archives also has a copy, unknown date.

**Hostels**

**Ewerby.** A building rather than huts.

**July 1946** – Hostel leader; St/Fw Noack (A). Held its own discussion group. Classes for history.

**January 1947** – Hostel leader; Fw Graeser (B). No electricity supply.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942/3 | 1945 | 7/1946 | 9/1946 | 1/1947 | 4/1947 | 10/1947 |
| Ewerby |  |  | 88 | 94 | 90 |  |  |

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| **Hanthorpe** Hanthorpe House, demolished 1951. TF 084 243.  Reported to have held Italian pows before Germans.  **November 1945** – “*a large private house with a room set apart for classes*.”  **July 1946** – Hostel leader; St/Fw Berkmann (B). Held its own discussion group.  **January 1947** – Hostel leader; Fw Hans Mueller (B). No electricity supply – oil lamps used.  **October 1947** – same leader.  Several websites have a picture of a hut which is described as the pow camp cinema. I think this is incorrect. The October 1947 report stated; “*Hanthorpe hostel has only oil lamps and PsW there must rely on local cinemas*.” (Besides, as shows were only shown every three weeks, if there was an electricity supply – what was the hut used for on the other 20 / 21 days?).   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | 1942/3 | 1945 | 7/1946 | 9/1946 | 1/1947 | 4/1947 | 10/1947 | | Hanthorpe |  |  | 100 | 98 | 90 | 90 | 87 G | |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1958 |

**North Kyme.** A building rather than hutted.

**14 July 1946** – hostel taken over from camp 138.

**July 1946** – Hostel leader; St.O/Fw Sippel (B). No wireless. **January 1947** – same leader.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942/3 | 1945 | 7/1946 | 9/1946 | 1/1947 | 4/1947 | 10/1947 |
| N. Kyme |  | With C138 | 68 | 69 | 60 |  |  |

**St Lambert’s Hall, Weston**. TF 299 266. Demolished in the 1950’s.

**26 June 1945 –** PID Progress Report 122, recorded German pows being sent to this hostel.

**18 August 1945** - In an article referring to pows working in Lincolnshire – “*For some weeks there have been 70 at St. Lambert’s Hall, Weston*.” From ‘Lincolnshire Standard and Boston Guardian.’

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942/3 | 1945 | 7/1946 | 9/1946 | 1/1947 | 4/1947 | 10/1947 |
| St Lamberts Hall |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Sleaford.** Hutted.

**July 1946** – Hostel leader; Fw Hupfauer (B). Classes for mathematics.

**January 1947** – Hostel leader; Fw Brinkmann (B)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942/3 | 1945 | 7/1946 | 9/1946 | 1/1947 | 4/1947 | 10/1947 |
| Sleaford |  |  | 279 | 303 | 260 | 260 |  |

**Swineshead.** Hutted

**July 1945** – listed as 2 hostels for this one entry. Leaders; 1 – St/Fw Walter Mueller (B) 2 – Fw Graese (B)

**January 1947** – Hostel leader; St/Fw Walter Mueller (B) (as Hostel 1 before). No electricity supply.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942/3 | 1945 | 7/1946 | 9/1946 | 1/1947 | 4/1947 | 10/1947 |
| Swineshead 1 |  |  | 51 | 50 | 45 | 45 |  |
| Swineshead 2 |  |  | 52 |

**Walcot.** Hutted.

**14 July 1946** – hostel taken over from camp 138

**July 1946** – Hostel leader. SS sturmann Strauch (B-). Classes for chemistry.

**January 1947** – same leader, aged 22, “*is an ignoramus, Nazi-tainted, and too young* [and] *inexperienced.*”

**October 1947** – Hostel leader; Fw J Bruxmeier (B+)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942/3 | 1945 | 7/1946 | 9/1946 | 1/1947 | 4/1947 | 10/1947 |
| Walcot |  | With C138 | 57 | 60 | 55 | 50 | 49 G |