**Camp 103** **- Moota Camp, Cockermouth, Cumberland**

Included in the 1945 ICRC camp list – Labour Camp. 103. Moota Camp, Cockermouth, Cumberland.

|  |
| --- |
| **1947 Camp list** |
| 103(G.W.C.) | Moota Camp, Cockermouth, Cumberland | W. | Priswar, Cockermouth | Aspatria 266 | Aspatria | Major N.Patterson | v/1452/2 |

|  |
| --- |
| **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 |
| NY 160 369 | 89 | 103 | Moota Camp, Moota Hill, Cockermouth | Cumberland | 2 | German Working Camp | STANDARD type. Currently functioning as a hotel |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| \*There are two books with details about Moota Camp, I provide an outline and some further information here.**Location:** On the A595, 7 km NE of Cockermouth.**Before the camp:** Farmland.**Pow Camp:** Built during 1942 by Thomas Armstrong Ltd of Cockermouth with a capacity for up to 1,200 pows. Italian Pows, then a German Working Camp. The rank of the Commandants, (major rather than Lieutenant colonel) indicate that the camp did not hold over 1000 pows at any time.The site had a standard layout with a main pow compound, with guards’ huts and offices at the front alongside the road. Buildings included a water tower, offices, officer's mess, a canteen, guard rooms, barrack huts, ablution blocks, cell blocks, a camp reception station (medical facility/hospital), a cookhouse, dining rooms, recreation rooms and living huts or tents.**1943** – hostel listed for Italians - Heysham Towers**14 March 1944** (420 pows) and **28 June 1944** - International Red Cross inspections – outline details in book\* There are records of an escape attempt by an Italian, and later by two Germans in April 1944.**6 March 1945** – PID Progress Report No 45 – Political screening of German pows had been carried out and 35 identified Nazis were removed. The camp was then classified as ‘White’ – political grade A (non-Nazi). |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1957 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **< 19 February 1946** – Photograph taken by Frédérick Bieri – International Red Cross Inspector. © ICRC Archives. The date of the suggests that there may have been more IRC inspections than the 2 mentioned above.**1946** – Intake of many pows from camps in the USA. Most had very low morale as they had been misinformed in the US that they were being repatriated. Instead, they found themselves in working camps in the UK.

|  |
| --- |
| 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. If there were still Italian pows in hostels, they were usually ignored by PID. |

Below, 2 PID reports, not included in the book\*. |

**18-20 November 1946** – Short report on Re-education and Screening Ps/W. Strength; 1 officer (the M.O.), 666 Other Ranks in HQ, 3 hostels, detached and billets.

This was recorded as visit number 5 – the previous reports are not in the National Archive file.

Commandant: Major Patterson Camp leader: Uffz Welz (A)

Interpreter: S/Sgt Alexander Deputy C/L: Stfeldw Wollensack (B)

 German M.O.: Dr Wohl (A)

The Commandant was a recent appointment, he was on leave. 2nd i/c Captain Jowett. The Interpreter was interested in re-education, but was overworked.

Despite being an overall ‘white’ camp – morale was recorded as being very low.

A major complaint concerned unfair repatriations already made. They stated that at least 6 of those graded ‘A’ and repatriated were in fact Nazis. This included one pow who had been a party member since 1927, a Nazi lecturer with his army unit, had beaten up democratic pows and had been a guard at Dachau concentration camp!

Other general complaints included lack of freedoms that had been promised, slow repatriation and poor exchange rate for money earned. The visitor held a general meeting and tried to explain the reasons behind some of these negative factors. He stated that no “Nazi-elements” could be found in the camp, (so why were 11 pows graded as ‘C’?).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Political screening:  | A | B+ | B | B- | C | Unscreened |
|  | 61 | 100 | 426 | 66 | 11 | 3 |

It was stated that re-education activities were ‘favourable,’ but the standard list of activities was not given.

One hut was used as a chapel. It may have been decorated by Italian pows, but the highly decorated artwork was by an unknown German pow along the side and ceiling panels.

**12-14 February 1947** - Report on Re-education and Screen Ps/W. Strength; 2 officers, 518 OR. Visit 6.

Commandant: Major Patterson Camp leader: Stfeldw Wollensack (B) [was deputy]

Interpreter: Lt Stone Deputy C/L: None

German M.O.: Dr Wohl (A)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Political screening: | A | B+ | B | B- | C |
|  | 42 | 75 | 333 | 62 | 8 |

111 pows were appealing against their political grades, (the better the grade, the sooner repatriated, in theory). 28 appeals had been heard, 27 were allowed – the visitor believed at least another 30 men should be upgraded to ‘A’. 274 pows repatriated to date.

Morale continued to be low due to slow repatriations and bad news from Germany. It was stated that the Commandant’s “*human attitude*” was appreciated, but he only allowed 40 men out of camp for 2 hours at a time – a greater restriction than at most camps.

About 1/3 were ‘youth pows (under 25).

The standard list of re-education activities was given in a lazy manner with few details:

Wochenpost and Ausblick – separate appendix.

Newspapers – “*Usually adequate*” – supply had been a problem for 3 weeks.

Library – “*Adequate*.”

Lectures – infrequent, last was in December, more requested.

Discussion group – Fortnightly, 25 – 40% attended.

Films – “*Adequate*.” The admission fee was considered too high – presumably this was either Gaumont British or Travelling Films who charged 6d per pow, YMCA films were cheaper.

Wireless – “*Adequate*.”

Camp magazine – Supply of paper and stencils was adequate. 230 copies monthly. “*Moota Kurier Zeitung des Lagers 103*.”

Press review – Weekly at HQ and hostel.

English instruction – separate appendix.

Information room – Exhibitions of text / pictures. This camp was very active and produced their own exhibition materials.

Other camp activities –

Religion – Protestant padre, Dr Reinhardt, held regular services – he was described as “*a trouble maker and unpopular.”* RC pows could attend local services and a German speaking English priest visited weekly.

Education – “*Adequate.”*

Entertainment – A theatre group and an orchestra.

**May 1947** – recorded as a satellite camp to Merry Thought Camp 76. Major Patterson still as Commanding Officer.

Known Camp Commandants:

1946 Major G Collins

1947 Major N Patterson

**After the camp:** Became a camp for displaced persons, mainly east Europeans, in 1947. For a while an agricultural hostel. 2019 Garden centre.

**Further information:**

National Archives –

FO 939/274 – Exhibition: 103 Camp, Moota Camp, Cockermouth, Cumberland. Dated 1945-1946. This exhibition was part of activities organised for re-education purposes.

FO 1120/224 – ‘Re-educational survey visit reports for camps 100 to 106’. Used above.

FO 916/908 – IRC Reports.

\* Moota Camp 103, Gloria Edwards, 2005 – and; The War Years, Life in Cockermouth and Moota POW Camp, Gloria Edwards, 2009 – both by Little Bird Publications.

The Imperial War Museum has a copy of the magazine dated May 1947. Ref LBY E.J. 395.

March 1946 Magazine - [Moota Kurier : Zeitung des Lagers 103 : Moota-Camp - The Wiener Holocaust Library](https://www.whlcollections.org/image/99713/)

Catalogue entry - [21 - Church Register of the Evangelical congregation at camp 103 - 1947](https://www.thcatalogue.org.uk/calmview/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=W%2fSGG%2fA%2f5%2f5%2f21)

Photos - <https://cockermouthhistory.uk/war/war-moota-camp/>

**Numbers of pows**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Open |  |  | With other camps |  |  | Unknown |  |  | Not open |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 Italian | 11/1946 German | 2/1947 German | 5/1947 |
| Main |  | 362 | 303 | Satellite for C76 |
| Heysham Towers |  |  |  |  |
| Abbeytown |  | 49 |  |  |
| Cockermouth |  | 32 |  |  |
| Wath Head |  | 75 | 70 | Hostel for C76 |
| Detached |  | 37 | 58 |  |
| Billets |  | 112 | 89 |  |
| TOTALS |  | 667 | 520 |  |

**Hostels**

**Abbeytown.** (From variousmemories -Abbeytown had 2 pow camps - The Italian camp was on the right hand side of the road as you go out of Abbeytown towards Wigton as you go over the hill. *“You could see it off the top deck of the bus… Italians worked on the farms and used to go to the pictures, I can remember them standing in the queue*.” The German POW camp was opposite what was Robsons bakery, now the Infants’ school).

**11/1946** – Hostel leader; Feldw. Kawalek (B)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 Italian | 11/1946 German | 2/1947 German | 5/1947 |
| Abbeytown |  | 49 |  |  |

**Cockermouth.**

**11/1946** – Hostel leader; Feldw Haeberle (B)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 Italian | 11/1946 German | 2/1947 German | 5/1947 |
| Cockermouth |  | 32 |  |  |

**Heysham Towers.** (Heysham Towers used to be a popular holiday camp).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 Italian | 11/1946 German | 2/1947 German | 5/1947 |
| Heysham Towers |  |  |  |  |

**Wath Head.** (Possibly at Wath Head RAF base).

**11/1946** – Hostel leader; Wachtm. Severin (B+). **2/1947** – same leader, upgrade to A.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 Italian | 11/1946 German | 2/1947 German | 5/1947 |
| Wath Head |  | 75 | 70 | Hostel for C76 |