**Camp 16, 1013****, 1024 Deer Park Camp, Dalkeith, Midlothian**

**NOTE –** there was another Deer Park Camp in Aberdeenshire – Camp 111.

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| **1947 Camp List** | | | | | |
| 1013(G.Wkg.Coy) | Sc | Deer Park Camp, Dalkeith, Midlothian | Dalkeith 2154 | 105 | V/1270/4 |
| 1024(G.Wkg.Coy) | Sc | Deer Park Camp, Dalkeith, Midlothian | Dalkeith 2154 | 105 | V/1270/4 |

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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 |
|  |  | 1013 | Deer Park Camp, Dalkeith | Midlothian |  | German Working Camp | Scotland. See Camp no.1024 |

**NOTE –** Camp 1013 existed first as a large pow working camp. Camp 1024 was alongside, it had its own administration, pows and role, but shared facilities with 1013. Later the site became a hostel for Gosford Camp 16. Finally, as the Gosford Camp closed down, Deer Park carried on a while longer and retained the number 16.

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| **Location:** NGR centred on NT 3400 6840  **Before the camp:**  **Pow Camp:** “*Two German Working prisoner-of-war camps… have been identified from vertical air photographs (106G/Scot/UK 123, Part I, 6011-6013, flown 22 June 1946) in an area between Cat Haugh and The Kennels to the E of the River South Esk.*  *Three separate areas of huts can be seen on the air photographs. The main group to the E and SE of Cat Haugh comprises about 40 huts, mainly of the Nissen type. The two other smaller areas are situated N and S of a building annotated as 'The Kennels' on the current OS 1:2500 scale digital map. Of the group to the N, only three huts are still standing by the date of the photograph, but several hut bases can also be seen immediately N of these structures*.” (Canmore)  Not listed as a camp for Italian pows. 1013 probably opened 1944/45 – not confirmed.  News article about an escape attempt, believed to be from Deer Park Camp –  “*Dalkeith Police were responsible for the capture on Tuesday afternoon of two of the German Prisoners who had escaped from an east of Scotland interment camp early that morning.*  *Inspector Sanders, Sgt Cockburn and 4 constables from Dalkeith took part in a search of the grounds of Dalkeith Palace when it was learned that two suspicious characters had been seen there by the gamekeeper, and their efforts resulted in the recapture of two men.*  *The heads of police departments were called out when it was found out the two men were missing, and throughout the remainder of the night the police over a wide area co-operated with the military authorities in conducting a close watch at ports and on roads. The prisoners timed their escape to take advantage of favourable weather conditions.* |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1958 |

*Dalkeith police were notified of the escape during the night but it was not until about nine o’clock that information was received which indicated that the men were in the neighbourhood. Mr William Jackson, gamekeeper, reported that he had encountered two men in the grounds of Dalkeith House. He came upon them at the side of a burn and one of them appeared to be brushing his teeth, whilst the other was lying sleeping under a tree.*

*At that time he had no knowledge that any German prisoners had escaped but knowing no civilians had any right to be in the place and his suspicions being aroused by their appearance and behaviour, he challenged them. When one of the men replied they were from the camp, Mr Jackson relied “You had better come along with me to the camp.” To this they replied in broken English they did not want to. Mr Jackson was taking them towards Dalkeith House when one of them said “Are you the Police?” and then both made a dash for the woods. Knowing that single handed he had little chance of capturing the men, Mr Jackson communicated with the local police and military. He had at first thought the men were poachers but learned that four prisoners had escaped from the internment camp. A search party of police and military was organised and an intensive search was initiated.*

*Musselburgh police were also informed and a cordon was thrown around the estate. The thickly wooded grounds provided plenty of cover and an indication of the thoroughness of the search is that the men were captured after an hour’s search.*

*When Inspector Sanders and Sgt Cockburn arrived at the place, they found that the undergrowth had already been exhaustively searched without success. The Inspector noticed two small pieces of red silk lying on the ground amongst the trees and concluded that they were part of the identity patches worn by prisoners of war.*

*This proved to be a vital find, and as the bushes had already been searched, the Inspector gave orders for the trees to be searched. This led quickly to the two men being discovered taking refuge in the branches of a large Yew tree near to the King’s Gates.*

*The men were high up the tree and when told to come down they appeared to be under the impression the police were armed as the first man raised his hand in surrender, muttered something and scrambled to the ground. The other was spotted higher up the same tree and appeared to be more frightened and when they were in police custody they seemed more relieved than anything else. One of the men was in seafaring clothing, including a dark blue jacket and the other was dressed in civilian clothes. The police took the prisoners to Dalkeith House where they were handed over to Edinburgh City Police, within a short time they were enjoying a hearty meal and clean socks for which they seemed to be very grateful.*

*The men claimed they were the only ones in the area but admitted that there were four of them who had escaped from the camp. The two captured at Dalkeith were George Sluzalex, (22) and Frans Feltens (25)*

***Second capture***

*Later the same day word was received by Dalkeith police that two men answering the descriptions of the other two escaped prisoners had asked for tea at a house in the Eskbank district. When the woman of the house asked them if they wanted food she got no reply but the men spoke to each other in a ‘foreign language’ unknown to her and asked again for tea. She gave them their tea but her suspicions were aroused. Before she could get word to the police the men had gone. They were believed to made off to the Wadingburn area of Lasswade. As a result of information received a search was made of Newbattle Policies without success. Early in the afternoon though the two Germans were sighted at Heriot and arrested by Edinburgh City Police, near to the McFie Hall.*

*Although the camp is not named it was in all probability Deer Park Camp which was in the grounds of Dalkeith Palace amongst other places throughout the area. No 1 Army School was also based there, along with Polish soldiers in exile. Hiding up in the grounds of Dalkeith Palace was not a good choice!”*

[ From - <https://www.newbattleatwar.com/pows-captured> ]

**1945** - According to the English Heritage report above, Camp 1013 was a German working camp.

**29 July 1946 –** formation of pow Camp 1024

**26-27 August 1946 – Camp 1024 -** Capt J H Maxwell visited to “*Introduce Re-education*” and “*Selection of A’s for repatriation.”* Strength - 0 officers; 555 OR.

The HQ for 1024 was located at the same site as 1013 Pow Company – but they had their own pows, staff and were administratively independent. 1013 was the larger of the 2 camps. Accommodation was in Nissen huts and a re-building programme was underway.

Commandant: Major R L Battersby [from the Pioneer Corps]. Camp leader: ObFw. Kurt Boettcher (B)

Interpreter: None Deputy C/L: Obgefr. Wilhelm Resenhoefft (B+)

German M.O.: None

Camp 1024 was a working company under the command of 105 Group Pioneer Corps. The pows had been shipped from Belgium, via Arbury Hall camp 106 - about 50% had been in pow camps in the US before that.

Of the 555 pows; 52 were staff at the HQ; 470 were detached for training in units all over Scotland. Training was mainly for cooks, kitchen staff, waiters and some transport specialists. The largest groups being:

112 at No.11 I.T.C, Edinburgh [Infantry Training Centre]

37 at Scottish Command Signals, Edinburgh

66 at No.5 P.T.C. Lanarks [Primary Training Centre, Winston Barracks, Lanark].

100 at No.100 P.T.C., Edinburgh

Morale was regarded as low. This was mainly due to having been shipped to Scotland after many had felt they were due for repatriation from Belgium. This was more so for the pows who had previously been held in the US as they had been led to believe they were being shipped back to Germany – the US authorities were aware of their actual destination being the UK. Lack of mail was a further negative factor for many. The pows were noted as politically apathetic and no trouble was recorded.

The standard list of re-education activities was given, but little had started. This was partly due to the small number of pows at the Deer Park site, but also their low morale. A Welfare Committee of 5 pows had been formed.

Wochenpost and Ausblick – None received as yet.

Newspapers – Only some passed on from the British mess. No German papers received.

Lectures – none.

Discussion group – None. The Welfare Committee did not believe the pows were ready for this.

Library – 150 books from the YMCA, mostly novels.

Films – None. YMCA films due to be shown every 3 weeks in conjunction with 1013 Coy..

Wireless – 1 set under control of camp leader, with 1 loudspeaker in the canteen. An outside speaker was shared with camp 1013.

Camp magazine – intended to publish one with camp 1013.

English instruction – None as yet. Some pows were attending classes run by camp 1013.

Other activities:

Religion – pows were able to attend local services.

Theatre and Orchestra – A theatre was to be built in a hut for use by 1013 and 1024 Coys. They hoped to form joint theatre and orchestra groups.

**23/24 January 1947** – **Camp 1024** - P H MacDonald visited to carry out a re-education survey. Strength – 0 Officers; 483 OR.

Commandant: Major R L Battersby. Camp leader: Obgefr. Wilhelm Resenhoeft (B+) [Previously deputy]

Interpreter: None Deputy C/L: None

German M.O.: Ass Arzt Schwarz (B)

The camp leader was described as; “..*a 43 years old Studienrat from a secondary school in Kiel, with a passive Party membership since March 1933. Whilst his views are now fairly sound he is in no way a fighter for political conversion and is content to carry out his duties quietly.”* The visitor tried to encourage him to be more active for re-education.

56 pows at HQ - “*The HQ camp staff of 54 (56?) shares the camp with 1013 Coy*.”

71 attached to Redford Barracks, Edinburgh

Rest in 33 detachments with British units throughout Scotland.

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| Political screening: | A | B+ | B | B- | C | Unscreened |
|  | 8 | 110 | 193 | 66 | 42 | 64 |

7 appeals against political gradings had been made – 5 upheld. This high rate of successful appeals was reflected in most camps. Better gradings meant earlier repatriation. 103 pows repatriated to date.

Morale was only slightly improved since the July 1946 report and there was still little political interest.

40% of the pows were ‘youth’ (under-25) including 30 ex Waffen-SS. 10 were selected by the visitor to attend the youth camp.

Facilities were shared with Camp 1013. Re-education of many pows was not possible as they were so widely distributed. There was slight improvement on the supply of books, English and German newspapers and publications. The shared camp magazine and discussion groups had still not started.

Other camp activities – “*identical with 1013*”

**9/10 February 1948** – Lecturer, Mr Bloch, visited - Deer Park was listed as a hostel to Gosford Camp 16 with total strength of 300. There is no mention of it being two separate companies.

**13 February 1948** – 337 pows, still listed as a hostel to Gosford. Camp leader Fw. Schmidt. Pows were being moved fairly frequently as camps were shut down - *“The Ps/W at Dalkeith were formerly in hostels belonging to 123 Camp,* [Dalmahoy, Midlothian] *and deplore the change: their morale is rather poor…”*

**End February / April 1948 –** Gosford Camp 16 was wound down and became a hostel to Deer Park Camp. Deer Park took the HQ camp number 16 for this short time until it too was closed down.

**10 March 1948** – letter from the German Section in London about English diplomas, lists Deer Park Camp as Number 16.

At some point in 1948 Ukrainian pows who had fought with the Germans in the Galicia Division, (Waffen-SS Division Galizien) were moved here. The division was accused of major war crimes against civilians.

**12 April 1948** – Information in a letter to the Lecture Section of the Foreign Office – “*..the bulk of our men will be transferred by the end of April, when we will have approximately 125 men in this unit. This figure only applies to German P/W as we have received no instructions about the Ukrainian P/W who are in this unit. The present strength of Ukrainian P/W is 960.”*

**27-29 April 1948** – A report by J C Milner on re-education at Deer Park Camp 16. Total strength 117 O.R.

Main camp 94 / Gosford hostel 14 / Mortonhall hostel 9 / A note that there is a Ukrainian hostel at Amisfield.

Commandant: Lt Col W A H Maxwell, transferred from Gosford Camp 16 Camp Leader: Fw Robran

German M.O. U/Arzt Hack, transferred from Gosford Camp 16

*“The camp is a good example of the beneficial influence on PW Outlook exerted by a sympathetic and understanding Commandant and staff, who do not insist on a rigid military discipline… it is a happy camp and pro-British feeling predominates.”* Another positive factor was the good relations with local civilians.

A very non-scientific survey was carried out her and in several other camps. It stated that in this camp the feelings of pows towards the British were:

Liking – 35%

Benefit of doubt – 40%

Indifference – 20%

Distrust – 5%

There were few activities taking place – the pows were waiting for repatriation at any day.

Mortonhall hostel was previously attached to Garswood Camp 16 and was due to close.

**After the camp:** In 1948, the Ukrainian pows were allowed to stay in the UK under the ‘European Volunteer Workers Scheme’.

The site as it is now - <https://repatriatedlandscape.org/scotland/pow-sites-in-central-scotland/pow-camp-16-deer-park/>

**Further Information:**

National Archives – FO 939/100 – 16 Working Camp, Deer Park camp, Dalkeith, Midlothian and Gosford Camp, Longniddry, East Lothian. Dated 1945 – 1948. Used above – 90% of the documents are about Gosford.

FO 939/329 – 1024 Working Camp, Deer Park Camp, Dalkeith, Edinburgh. Dated 1946 – 1947 – used above.

[http://canmore.org.uk/site/272630](https://canmore.org.uk/site/272630)