**Camp 41 / 402** **Camp C19, The Avenue, Southampton, Hampshire (aka Southampton Common)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1947 Camp List** | | | | | | | |
| 402(G.W.C.) | Camp C.19, The Avenue, Southampton Common, Southampton | S | Priswar, Southampton | Southampton 75873 | Southampton Central | Lt.Col.R.D. Lake D.S.O. | v/1453/2 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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 |
| SU 417 149 | 196 | 402a | Camp C19, The Avenue, Southampton Common, Southampton | Hampshire | 4 |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Location:** The NGR above is shown on the map at x in Southampton Common.  **Before the camp:** Common parkland. The Common was taken over at the start of WW2 for the military. Marshalling Areas were located across southern England. The Area around Southampton was labelled ‘C’ – four troop camps, C18, 19, 20 and 21 were located in Southampton Common. C19 became the pow camp after D-day.  **Pow Camp:** [Note – the suffix letter ‘a’ shown in the English Heritage list usually indicates a hostel – was this site a hostel for Lopcombe Corner Camp 402, and when that closed, Southampton then became the HQ?]  Probably opened late 1944 / early 1945 when Lopcombe Camp 402 was still open.  **January 1947 – October 1947** – known to have been independent Camp 402.  Abbreviated details extracted from National Archive file FO 1120/212 for Ganger Camp 41. A PID inspector, L A Bloxham, gave a report about alleged subversive activities after the Southampton Camp became a satellite to Camp 41 in October 1947. He had previously made regular visits to 402 since January –  *“This camp has always been unfortunate in its C.L’s* [Camp Leaders]; *since January there have been three, Rachfall, Hossbach and Aussprung…. On August 11th at the request of the commandant, I recommended the removal of the camp Leader, Hossbach, who had proved inefficient and unco-operative.”* It was suggested that a ballot of the pows be held to select a new leader, with the Commandant (Lt Col Lake), having the right of veto if an unsuitable candidate was proposed. The Commandant dd not wish to do this as he believed the pows would elect the deputy CL, Aussprung – it was agreed he would be most unsuitable.  However, when the visitor returned on 29 September, he found that the Commandant had allowed a ballot and that Aussprung had indeed been elected. |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1963 |

Wm Ferdinand Aussprung, aged 34, married, from the British zone. Had been a member of the Allgemeine SS since 1934. Had been deputy at Southampton since it was formed.

The visitor considered that although Aussprung was doing routine work reasonably well, he was unsuitable to be CL. He was still Camp Leader when the camp became a satellite camp – see Ganger Camp 41.

**20 October 1947** – Southampton became a satellite camp for Ganger Camp 41.

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 mention welfare, sports, games, pastimes, crafts, etc of the pows.

**4 January 1948** – When Ganger Camp 41 closed, this site became HQ and was renamed Camp 41. It was referred to as Southampton Common Camp. A PID visit was made, at the Commandant’s request, to select new staff. Strength; 2 officers, 881 OR.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of pows: | HQ | Cusses Gorse | Andover | Winchester | Billetees |
|  | 603 | 34 | 38 | 81 | 127 |

Political screening: A 3; B 880.

Commandant: Lt Col Downe [previously with Ganger Camp 41] Camp leader: Uffz Waller (B)

Interpreter: S/Sgt Forrest [also at Ganger Camp 41] Deputy C/L: Uffz Wesener (B)

German M.O.: A/Arzt Buerger [previously with Ganger Camp 41]

Recorded in this report that Southampton was originally an independent HQ camp, became a Satellite, and was then again a HQ. It was expected that in February, Setley Plain Camp 65 would close and become a satellite for Southampton.

There had been difficulties selecting a camp leader, mentioned above, and there was still some friction about the appointment of Uffz.Waller. The previous leader had nominated a different man without any authority. The man who had been nominated was Uffz Heinz Wesener, aged 29, married, from the British zone, a clerk. He had no Nazi Party connections. A solution was proposed by making him deputy camp leader.

Although morale was regarded as generally high, there was some friction arising from the merger of the camps. Lt Col Downe tightened discipline at Southampton, which the original C402 pows resented. The pows from C41 who had carried out agricultural work, resented the easier working conditions of those at C402 who worked for the Ministry of Works. It was believed that the tensions would soon diminish.

There were several pows who had attended the special training course at Wilton Park to lead re-education activities. However, due to the amalgamation of camps, many activities had been suspended. Only two activities were mentioned:

Camp magazine – suspended, but hoped to restart soon.

Library – very large with 3700 books from the two camps.

**16-21 February 1948** – Re-education survey. Strength; 3 officers, 1317 OR

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of pows: | HQ | Cusses Gorse | Andover | Winchester | Setley Plain | Billetees |
|  | 552 | 31 | Not listed | 41 | 496 | 200 |

Political screening: A 1; B 1319.

A new Commandant, Major Utley – he had been Commandant at Setley Plain when it was Camp 65. He stated that he was not satisfied with the state of this camp.

The S/Sgt Interpreter was criticised as being mainly interested in his discharge and being *“not very satisfactory*” when at Glen Mill. This seems unfair as he later worked at Ganger Camp 41 where he did not receive any criticism.

Re-education activities had been disrupted due to the amalgamation of camps and repatriations. The standard list was given:

Lectures – regular.

Discussion groups – suspended.

Camp magazine – Fortnightly. ‘Luginsland Zeitung des pow Lagers 402’ (Luginsland? Perhaps Lug ins land which is look into the land?)

Press review – News was translated and read out, often with discussions. The translations were then posted in the reading room.

Newspapers – Adequate English papers. German papers fairly regular.

Library – Large, 3000 books.

Information room – exhibition waiting to be put up with title ‘Jegend Bewegung in England.’ (Youth Movement in England).

Wireless – Adequate

Films – from YMCA and Travelling Films.

Other activities – A small orchestra and church services.

**9/12 March 1948** – Re-education survey. Strength; 3 officers, 1064 OR.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of pows: | HQ | Cusses Gorse | Andover | Winchester | Setley Plain | Whitwell | Hamstead | Osborne | Billetees |
|  | 517 | 31 | Not listed | 42 | 278 | 27 | 85 | 82 | 5 |

Number of pows repatriated to date: 1712 + 249 pows who gained civilian status.

Commandant: Major Utley Camp leader: Wm. Tschammer (B)

Interpreter: S/Sgt Forrest Deputy C/L: Uffz Sembach (B)

German M.O.: A/Arzt Dr Drescher (B)

In this report the S/Sgt interpreter received praise as, “*efficient and co-operative*.”

The camp was an amalgamation of 3 formerly independent camps – Ganger 41, Setley Plain 65 and Southampton 402. It had also taken on pows from other camps in England and Scotland which were closing down.

A survey of pow attitudes towards Britain was carried out in camps that were still open. It was carried out in an entirely non-scientific manner, it was sometimes just a show of hands in public to questions raised – it had little validity. For what it is worth the survey at Southampton found;

0% had hatred or dislike of Britain.

2½% had a distrust, and they were all (41) from Thorp Hall Camp 250 in Yorkshire.

About 50% - had no definite views, the visitor called them; “*the dull and indifferent.”*

The rest had; “*a positive liking for the British way of life.”*

The results in all camps were dubious; these apparently ‘positive’ responses were way above any other camp.

It was stated that there were “*excellent outside contacts*” – but only very limited links with the WEA were detailed. Personal contacts between the pows and local civilians were excellent and the pows had given orchestral and theatrical performances.

The Further Education Committee on the Isle of Wight and in Lymington had offered excellent facilities free of charge. There was a weekly debating society in Lymington.

Known Camp Commandants:

c1947 Lt Col R D Lake D.S.O. (I think he was from the Northamptonshire Regiment).

1948 Lt Col N C H Downe. Formerly from the Royal Regiment of Artillery – a brief time in 1948 at Southampton Camp 41, then transferred 1948 to East Cams Camp 251.

1948 Major Utley. Previously Commandant at Setley Plain Camp 65.

There was also a transit camp at Southampton Docks.

**After the camp:** Returned to parkland.

**Further Information:**

National Archives FO 939/123 – 41 Working Camp, Ganger Camp, Romsey and Southampton Common Camp, Southampton, Hampshire. Dated 1945 – 1948. Used above.

IWM have a copy of the magazine dated January 1946, Ref LBY E.J. 392

**Hostels**

**Andover** (previously hostel for Ganger Camp 41)

**January 1948** – no hostel leader.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of pows | January 1948 | February 1948 | March 1948 |
|  | 38 | - | - |

**Cusses Gorse** (previously hostel for Ganger Camp 41)

**January 1948** – Hostel leader; O/Fw Billker (B)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of pows | January 1948 | February 1948 | March 1948 |
|  | 34 | 31 | 31 |

**Hamstead, Isle of Wight** (previously a hostel for Setley Plain Camp 65).

**March 1948** – Hostel leader; O/Fw Schneider (B+)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of pows | January 1948 | February 1948 | March 1948 |
|  | With Setley Plain Camp 65 | | 85 |

**Osborne, Isle of Wight** (previously a hostel for Setley Plain Camp 65).

**March 1948** – Hostel leader; St Kubiessa (B)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of pows | January 1948 | February 1948 | March 1948 |
|  | With Setley Plain Camp 65 | | 82 |

**Setley Plain Satellite** (previously Camp 65).

**February 1948** – Camp leader; Fw Pilnicki (B)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of pows | January 1948 | February 1948 | March 1948 |
|  | Camp 65 | 496 | 278 |

**Whitwell, Isle of Wight** (previously a hostel for Setley Plain Camp 65).

**March 1948** – Hostel leader; I/Fw Steiniger (B)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of pows | January 1948 | February 1948 | March 1948 |
|  | With Setley Plain Camp 65 | | 27 |

**Winchester** (previously hostel for Ganger Camp 41)

**January 1948** – Hostel leader; Uffz Langkauer (B).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of pows | January 1948 | February 1948 | March 1948 |
|  | 81 | 41 | 42 |