**Camp 159 (& 163) - B****utterwick Camp, Boythorpe, Yorkshire**

|  |
| --- |
| **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 |
| SE 995 719 | 101 | 159 | Butterwick Camp, Boythorpe | Yorkshire | 4 |  | Rectangular double wire enclosure with watchtowers, camp formed chiefly of tents. See Camp no.159 / 163 |
| 163 | Base camp |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Location:** 17 km S of Scarborough. NOTE there were 2 BUTTERWICK camps in Yorkshire, see also Camp 244.**Before the camp:** Farmland**Pow Camp:** Italian and then German pows.Numbered 163 and later 159.**1943** – memories of Italian pows. Pow mail seen, sent to Italy dated July 1943**14 April 1945** – War Diary, (WD) A unit based at Lingfield, Eastern Command Cage with Commandant Major I R Lovell: “*The unit redesignated as No.163 Prisoner of War Camp (other ranks).”***24 April 1945** – WD, Lingfield: “*Order received to move to Butterwick Camp, Yorks.”***25 April 1945** – WD, Lingfield: “*Advance party (1 officer and 29 Ors) left for Butterwick Camp.”***27 April 1945** – WD, Lingfield: “*Main body (3 officers and 142 Ors) left for Butterick Camp… Promotion of Commandant to rank of Temp.Lieut Col w.e.f. 14 April 45.”***May to September 1945** – Further WD entries at Camp 163, Butterwick.**2 May 1945** – WD; “*2 German P.W. doctors and 60 German P.W. other ranks received from No.17 Camp… 500 German P.W. received from No.9 Camp.”***3 – 4 May 1945** – 1390 further OR pows from No.9 camp and 9 German officers. It is doubtful if the officers stayed here for long. |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1958 |

**7-12 May 1945** – 1 German doctor received from No.164 Camp, and 2500 German OR pows received from No.17 Camp.

WD continues with transfers of pows and British officers in and out of the camp. Some German pows sent to Butterwick only stayed for a few days before being sent on to other camps. Selected entries:

**24 July 1945** – Major General T N F Wilson, Commanding East and West Riding District visited the camp. A field bakery was installed and pows produced their own bread.

**1 August 1945** – Lt Col S L Stewart, Inspector of Prisoners of War, carried out an inspection of the camp.

**11 September 1945** – Lt Col Lovell was posted to command No.33 pow camp. The new Commandant was Major F(?) B Jarvis.

**11 September 1945** – WD: “*163 Camp moved to Burrough House Camp, Langtoft, Nr Driffield; Handing over Butterwick Camp to 159 P.W. Camp. All remaining P.W. (1557) transferred to 159 P.W. Camp.”* POW Unit/camp 163 was disbanded soon after. This location continued as Camp 159. **END of WD in the National Archive file.**

Herbert Heinemann was based at this camp in 1945, extracts from; [www.hullwebs.co.uk/content/l-20c/conflict/ww2/memoirs/herbert/herbert-03.htm](http://www.hullwebs.co.uk/content/l-20c/conflict/ww2/memoirs/herbert/herbert-03.htm) (Discontinued?)

[The] *Commandant of the camp was - as far as I remember - Major Harris, a sharp officer* [possibly after September?]. *We were collected each morning and furthermore once or twice a day to irregular times and often during the night even when it was raining. Wet through we went back into our tents not very pleasant to us.*

*I did not count the number of the British guards; they should have been up to 30 or 40 soldiers. We were about 5000 PoW’s shared out to three cages numbered A,B,C, per 2000 of us in cage A and B, l000 in cage C.*

*We began by digging trenches around every tent to prevent water coming inside. It always was very slippery on rainy days and very muddy everywhere in the camp. But very soon sun was shining again and everything was ok until it was raining again.*

*At the 8th of May we were regarding a sort of firework, but very soon we saw the guardsmen shooting in the air.* ***WAR HAD COME TO ITS END****. I personally* [felt I] *was very lucky at that moment and I am sure the most of us were much more than only lucky.*

*Butterwick was a PoW working camp; there were no officers among us. At the very first time I was busy in the guard’s camp for a few days doing all sorts of light duty. In the following* [days] *I was commanded to a job called fire-point, a place outside the camp across the road. Nearly every day a tall guardsman with rifle expected me at the camp gate. Passing the guards camp on the way to that point he offered me a PLAYERS cigarette. I was wondering and this gesture had been occasion to fill me with astonishment. Within fewer days we became friends and we are still very very good friends. His name* [was] *Fred Young living in Stroud. He gave me his address before he left Butterwick camp. I contacted him after I was repatriated. My wife and I visited him at home in Stroud and we invited him and his wife a couple of years ago to spend a good time with us.*

*Food in Butterwick Camp was pretty short, one bowl with porridge every morning, one with soup at about 12 o’clock and 7 of us [sharing] a loaf of bread with a piece of margarine and small sausage or something else at night. Not sufficient at all for the youngest of us. We always were very hungry. Later I was told that food was even rationed for the people in your country.*

*On display in the middle of our cage we got the information that the USA had dropped the atom bomb, strange to me I never heard of things like this kind of bomb before. That was the end of WORLD WAR II.*

*In the meantime, farmers had started harvesting the crops. Nearly all the lot of us had to work on farm in the area, it was thrashing time. They took us to the farms by lorries. A change for us being outside the camp at last, contacting people working there. Sometimes we used to sing passing villages on our lorries and we noticed people were listening to our songs, that made us PoW’s happy. In the following time we were picking potatoes, afterwards pulling sugar beets and turnips. We did every kind of farm-work. Farmers sometimes offered a cup of tea or even a cigarette when he was good tempered. Farmer Wilson in Market Weighton - I remember him very well – supplied us with sandwiches, tea and cigarettes because we worked very hard pulling turnips in November. Meanwhile [there was] a fall in temperature at that time.*

*In the early morning of the 9th of November a few hundred of us set off to camp Bellasize, marching all the way from Butterwick camp passing the village [of] LANGTOFT to get to the railway station [at] Great Driffield. It took us a long time to get there. By the way, Butterwick was camp [Nr]163, not [Nr]159, I am sure.”*

**26 October 1946** – Article in the Hull Daily Mail told of the local vicar at Burton Fleming, Rev David W Murphy, showing films at the church for locals and for pows.

**1947** – Local memories included pows carrying out repairs to the Church and Church wall. One POW, who was a glazier, repaired some of the windows.

Known Camp Commandants

1945 Major/Lt Col I R Lovell from the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment

1945 Major F(?) B Jarvis from the Cheshire Regiment. Moved on to Wolseley Camp 96.

1945 – possible Major Harris – recalled by Herbert Heinemann above.

There were three American Transit Camps located in and around Butterwick – Camp 8 Burrow Camp; 8A Butterwick Camp; 8B North Buxton Camp, Butterwick.

**After the camp:** 2019 farmland

**Further Information:**

National Archives WO 166/17819 – 163 Prisoner of War Camp. Dated Jan-Sept 1945. Used above.