**Camp 194** **Teddesley Hall AND Council Houses Camp, Penkridge, Staffordshire**

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| **1947 Camp List** |
| 194((G.W.C.) | Council Houses Camp, Penkridge, Stafford | W. | Priswar, Penkridge | Penkridge 343 | Penkridge | Lt.Col.R.F.J. Hayward, V.C. | 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 |
| SJ 92 13 | 127 | 194 | Council Houses Camp, Penkridge | Staffordshire | 5 | Base Camp | Precise location not identified, NGR given for centre of village |
| SJ 947 157 | Teddesley Hall Camp, Penkridge |  |

**NOTE – this was one camp, but the location of the HQ changed according to where the Commandant was based.**

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| Council Houses site - Ordnance Survey 1954 / [raf\_106g\_uk\_1483\_rs\_4383 - Aerial Photo | Historic England](https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/collections/aerial-photos/record/raf_106g_uk_1483_rs_4383) | Teddesley Hall site - Ordnance Survey 1954 |

**Location:** Penkridge is 8km S of Stafford, 15km N of Wolverhampton.

Council Houses site - SJ 92 14. A military camp was on the old common lands, called The Marsh, between the River Penk and Cannock Road (shown above). A large council house estate was built later.

Teddesley Hall - Large [Georgian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgian_architecture) [English country house](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_country_house) and estate. Requisitioned at the start of the war for troop training. Troops later included the US army. There is an entry for the History of the 446th quartermaster troop transport company that they were located at Teddesley (with others) from 5 April 1944 to 18 May 1944.

**Pow Camp:**

**Late 1944 to start 1945** - recorded as holding Italian pows. When German pows arrived it is most likely that the Italians were held in a separate compound until repatraited.

**1944/1945** – Escape from the camp: “*13 POWs cut the wire in very foggy conditions. As soon as they were free they split up into small parties. But two were caught in Wolverhampton, two in Walsall, two in Derby, 4 single-handedly by a police office who tricked them in to believing he was taking them to get a lift when their stolen car ran out of petrol and two in Liverpool. The thirteenth man, whose believed intention was to head for Liverpool and stow aboard a ship, was never returned to the camp and today it is not clear whether this officer succeeded in getting away.* [No date recorded in this entry; the book ‘Stafford at War 1939 – 1945’ states the event happened on 18 December 1944 at Teddesley pow camp. (Nick Thomas, 2009, Pen and Sword books).]

*A later tunnel was suspected but couldn't be located by guards until the secret was eventually deliberately given away (under a bed in Hut 4) by the German camp choirmaster. The planned break out was to have been for 100+ POWs. The nerve of the choirmaster cracked under the pressure / fear of being found out and was making his way rather hurriedly towards the gates. He was spotted and after a short chase he made it through the gates and was transferred to another camp for his safety!”*

Details from; <https://www.islandfarm.wales/German_And_Italian_Escape_Attempts_From_Other_Camps_In_Great_Britain.htm>

Following the escape there was a period of deliberate obstruction/rebellion and an attempt at rushing the gate, stopped when guns were aimed at the pows who were armed with shovels.

There is a chapter about the above incidents in, ‘A Taste of Freedom, by Rober Jackson, 1964, Arthur Barker Ltd.’ – however, the accuracy of the details are dubious.

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

**15 November 1945** – Report on visit to Teddersley Hall Satellite Camp.

“*This camp consists of 2 compounds, one at Teddesley Hall, strength 1805, the second one known as Council Houses Camp, is about 2 miles away, nearer Penkridge, with a strength of 870. Council Houses Camp, although the smaller, is the HQ, i.e., the Commandant and Deputy Commandant have their offices in this camp. In Teddesley Hall is one Officers’ living quarters only.”*

There were 100 pows at both sites studying English. Both sites held a very wide range of classes and held weekly press reviews.

Teddesley Road Satellite Camp: More English classes / lectures were expected to start. Other classes included; shorthand, economics, geometry, German, law, maths, singing, tailoring, literature, physics, bookkeeping, geography, and music.

Council Houses HQ - Bible class, maths, calculations, electricity, bookkeeping, shorthand, chemistry, Italian, painting, breeding, building, French, music, law, singing, boxing.

**28 February 1946** - Camp magazine; [Der Ruf : Antifaschistische Wochenzeitung : Camp 194 - The Wiener Holocaust Library](https://www.whlcollections.org/image/112846/) (The Call: Anti-fascist weekly news). The magazine called the Council Houses site – ‘Penkridge.’

**1946** – Intake of pows from camps in the USA and Canada. Most of the ex-US pows had a very low morale as they had been misinformed in the US they were being repatriated. Instead, they found themselves in working camps in the UK. Pows from Canada were often C grade. They had been captured early in the war and had retained their Nazi ideology.

**15-18 July 1946** – Progress Report and select candidates for the special training camp. Strength 2 officers, 2544 Other Ranks.

Commandant: Lt Col P E Davidson, DSO Penkridge - Camp leader: Obmasch Schanz (A) Teddesley – Camp leader: Ofw Brunow (A)

Interpreters: Capt Rumney, S/Sgt Martin Deputy c/l: Fhr Mueller (B) Deputy c/l: Fwl Endert (B)

 German M.O Obarzt Heilemann German M.O. St.Arzt Juengling

This was a Base Camp with HQ listed as Council Houses, but then through the report it is referred to as Penkridge.

Like most Commandants, he was not interested in re-education. However, he did not obstruct IO Rumney, “*a very efficient young officer,”* from assisting with pow activities.

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| Political screening:  | A+ | A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C | C+ | Unscreened |
| Penkridge | 1 | 17 | 1 | 40 | 358 | 35 | 257 | 85 | 136 |
| Teddesley | 0 | 108 | 33 | 51 | 618 | 71 | 364 | 25 | 346 |

37% pows in political C [Black = Nazi] grade at Penkridge / 24% at Teddesley. These are both high numbers in comparison to most camps.

5 pows were selected as candidates for the special training course at Wilton Park.

50 pows had arrived from USA and Canada since February. 533 pows had been posted away from the camp, most were unfit or non-German.

The camp was due to change from a Base to a Working Camp and a number of pows were to be transferred out, including 120 protected personnel, 120 still unfit, and any C+. The C+ pows were to be rescreened before transfer as many were considered as no longer ardent Nazis since they were first screened before the end of the war. The pows remaining would then be classed as ‘employables.’

Penkridge – good morale, despite the number of C+. This was put down to a good range of activities and good relations with the British staff.

Teddesley – Morale was reported as deteriorating. One factor was that the A grades were disappointed at not having been repatriated. A rumour circulated round many camps that Nazis were being repatriated early. In this camp, the previous leader (Quaedvling) had been deposed and transferred away from here as a Nazi. He then wrote to the camp from Germany to state that he had subsequently been repatriated on medical grounds - not surprisingly this caused a lot of resentment and seemed to confirm the rumour.

Youth pows (under 25) – 35% at Penkridge, most were allocated to 3 huts and had their own talks and discussions each week. 30% at Teddesley, mostly apathetic to politics, there was a small Catholic Youth study group.

Re-education activities were more advanced at Penkridge. There was also an elected committee to develop education, lectures, sport and culture. Teddesley suffered as a previous active study leader had been repatriated. The standard list of activities was given:

Wochenpost / Ausblick – 350 to 400 copies of Wochenpost received. Unknown number of the less popular Ausblick.

Newspapers – difficulty in obtaining supplies, the local newsagent only supplied whatever papers were left unsold. 6 German papers received fortnightly.

Library – 350 books at Penkridge, 480 at Teddesley.

Lectures – regular and mostly popular depending on the speaker and the subject. c.250 attended at Penkridge, 300/350 at Teddesley.

Discussion groups – very popular at Penkridge. It was hoped a group would re-start at Teddesley.

Films – YMCA and PID films shown.

Wireless – a set in both camps controlled by the leaders. Extension loudspeakers in the dining and recreation huts. Pow programme was popular.

Camp magazine – “*High standard*.” Unknown number of copies or frequency. Needed more contributors of articles.

Press review – Informal talk based on the news 3 times a week at Penkridge with 100/120 attending. None at Teddesley.

Other camp activities –

Religion – Protestant padre at Penkridge and RC at Teddesley. Pows able to attend local churches.

Education – 400/500 regularly attended a wide range of classes.

Theatre – both camps had well equipped theatres. An 8 piece orchestra was shared between the 2 sites. Playscripts requested.

**31 August 1946** – English Inspector’s Report. Teddesley Hall recorded as HQ from this time. Total strength; 1920. 231 pupils at both sites.

Commandant: Lt Col Hayward. (Shown) Camp leader: Not listed.

**20/21 January 1947** – English Inspector’s Report. Total strength; 1478 in HQ, satellite, 1 hostel and billets.

Commandant: Lt Col Hayward Camp leader: Fritz Babo

111 pows studying English in 7 classes at HQ. Council Houses satellite called Penkridge Compound.

**23 April 1947** - English Inspector’s Report. Total strength; 1500 in HQ, satellite, 0 hostel and billets.

Commandant: Lt Col W L Vale. Camp leader: F Babo.

27 pupils in 2 classes at HQ was stated, but this is clearly incorrect, (see figures above and below).

**30 June / 1 July 1947** - English Inspector’s Report. Total strength; 1468 in HQ, satellite, and billets.

Commandant: Lt Col W L Vale. Camp leader: Hans Rockmann

108 pupils in 6 classes at HQ.

**22-25 July 1947** – Re-educational progress report. Strength; 3 officers, 1444 OR.

966 at Teddesley HQ; 426 Penkridge satellite; 55 in billets.

Commandant: Lt Col W L Vale Camp leader: Gefr Rockmann (B+)

Interpreter: S/Sgt Martin Deputy C/L: Uffz Voigt (B)

 German M.O.: Stabsarzt Dr Juengling (B-); Ass.Arzt Dr Donhauser (B)

The Commandant was co-operative with the aims of re-education – that is not to say he was actively promoting them. The camp had lost Interpreter Capt Rumney, who had been active in re-education, (but cf comments in January 1948).

Camp leader Rockmann, aged 45, schoolmaster, “*with all the heavy pedantry of his profession, yet solid and trustworthy, anti-militaristic, keenly interested in re-education and possessing the tact and patience necessary for the job*.”

Satellite camp leader, O/Faehnr. Mueller (A), previously deputy camp leader, aged 34, lawyer; a sincere anti-Nazi – he had postponed his repatriation.

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| Political screening: | A | B+ | B | B- |
|  | 23 | 194 | 1098 | 132 |

Morale was recorded as ‘good’ due to relationship with British staff, a range of activities, being able to walk out of camp, able to send parcels home, pleasant surroundings, and excellent amenities. Penkridge (Council Houses site) was noted for its “*outstanding spirit of ‘Kameradschaft’”* – it was said to have one of the finest reading rooms for pows in the country. The report did not mention that undoubtedly the main positive factor was the steadily growing number of repatriations - 550 to date from this camp.

One of the main negative factors was news of bad conditions in Germany, especially the Russian zone.

25-30% of the pows were ‘Youth.’ They were not considered to be a problem and no special arrangements had been made for them.

The committee arranging activities was found to have a ‘left-wing’ bias, so a few new members were introduced to create balance. Changes to activities:

Newspapers – adequate copies of daily and periodicals.10-12 German papers received fortnightly.

Library – 1530 books.

Discussion groups – excellent at both sites.

Films – supplied by YMCA and Travelling Films Ltd. TF were often considered to be poor quality.

Camp magazine – 400 copies fortnightly.

Information room – started in mid-July at both sites. Exhibiting text and pictures on a theme (e.g. ‘USA and USSR’). The Penkridge room was described as cold and unimaginative.

Religion – RC padre; Ogefr Henneken (A); Protestant padre; Ogefr Weeke (A). The two padres served both camps.

Education – a very wide range of classes continued – 250 attended at Teddesley.

Entertainments – Excellent 80 member choir had given several public performances. Active theatre group also performed at other local camps and at Shugborough Military Hospital Camp 99.

Outside contacts – informal contacts were made with local citizens. No formal contacts other than with local religious bodies.

**18/21 October 1947** – English Inspector’s Report. Total strength; 1455 at HQ, 1 satellite, 1 hostel and billets. NOTE – the Council Houses site at Penkridge was no longer listed.

Change to camp leader; Hermann Muller, previously leader at the Penkridge satellite camp. Rockmann, the previous camp leader, became the study leader.

59 pupils in 9 classes at all sites.

**13-16 January 1948** – Re-educational survey. Strength; 3 officers, 947 OR.

There was a new interpreter; 2/Lt Davies, “*most helpful*.”

A new deputy C/L; Walter Grothe (B+).

Regarding the 2 previous interpreters, Captain Rumney and S/Sgt Martin; the camp leader stated that they were “*very active communists”* and he was doing his best to counteract their influence. Without further details it is difficult to assess, it seems highly unlikely, but the comments were not challenged by the visitor.

Morale at Teddesley Hall HQ remained good.

Re-education activities at HQ showed signs of slowing down – and they were a lot less developed at Rugeley satellite.

Changes to activities –

Newspapers – British papers were received at HQ and sent on to Rugeley by the ‘rations truck.’ German and Swiss newspapers were held at HQ for 3 days and then sent on to Rugeley.

Library – 2500 books.

Press reviews – these had ended.

Information room – closed at HQ.

Education – the report stated that this continued to be ‘very good,’ however the evidence showed something very different with just 6 classes (other than English) attended by 28 pows, down from 250 in July! The carpentry class had just 2 pupils.

Entertainments – No mention of the choir. The theatre group had 20 members and was producing plays once every 2 months. The camp band had 13 members and gave 2 shows per month. Rugeley had no theatre group or band.

Outside contacts – slight links with Toc-H, WEA, the International Friendship League and small groups visited Cannock Council meetings.

**3 March 1948** – English Inspector’s Report. Strength 2491.

New camp leader; Jaehne. 4-6 pupils in 1 class at HQ.

**12 April 1948** – an issue in the camp and in general was raised in the House of Commons:

Mr. Swingler asked the Minister of Agriculture if he is aware that B/41758 P.O.W. Ernst Wedding, of 194 P.O.W. Camp, Penkridge, Stafford, has now been offered a post as a market gardener; and if he will take immediate steps to ensure that his repatriation is postponed until authority for his employment has been granted.

Mr. T. Williams - The full number of recruits authorised for Staffordshire has now been obtained, and I regret that this application cannot be approved.

Mr. Swingler - Does this mean that we must lose the services of this skilled horticulturist because the committee has no vacancy for him, when we are appealing to these men to volunteer their services because of the shortage of labour in agriculture generally?

Mr. Williams - As the hon. Member is aware, we are only able to go beyond the 16,000 referred to, first, where Germans are married to British wives, and secondly, where Germans wish to stay with the farmer who has been employing them regularly as a prisoner of war. I am told that Mr. Wedding has not actually been an agricultural worker.

Mr. Frank Byers - Is it not a fact that this scheme is far too rigid at the present time, and does not allow for any transfer from one county to another? Will the Minister look into this to make it much more flexible, because it is most unsatisfactory at the present time?

Mr. Williams - The hon. Member will be aware that we got permission first to retain 10,000 willing volunteers. We found that more than 10,000 volunteers were available, and the number was increased to 20,000, including Scotland. Beyond that point the Prime Minister made a statement the other day which indicated the two classes I have referred to, and there is a large number of European voluntary workers for whom we have to find places.

12 April 1948, Debate on Prisoner-Of-War Labour; Volume 449: debated on Monday 12 April 1948, House of Commons

**13/16 April 1948** – Routine Survey. Strength; 1 officer, 1531 OR.

This report was little more than a self-praise document for PID stating how well re-education activities had performed.

Commandant: Lt Col W L Vale Camp leader: F Halme? (B)

Interpreter: 2/Lt Davies Deputy C/L: G Peterlein (B)

 S/Sgt Davis German M.O.: Not listed.

The interpreters were described as “*very efficient.”*

A survey was conducted in camps still open at this time concerning pow attitudes to the British. It was pointless, carried out far too late and in totally random ways. Some visitors simply gathered whoever was around and asked them to give a show of hands to the questions, some only asked a ‘selected’ group – most did not state how the data was gathered or the numbers involved. For what it is worth, the results in this camp (unknown number, method or type of pow):

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| Hate | Dislike | Distrust | Indifference | Benefit of the doubt | Liking |
| 5% | 5% | 9% | 9% | 45% | 27% |

A resettlement team was due to visit the camp – again too late, and of little if any use, based on reports from other camps.

The camp closed soon after this report.

Known Camp Commandants:

Lt Col Reginald Frederick Johnson Hayward V.C. and M.C. (1891 – 1978). Details of the VC – [www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/30648/supplement/4967](http://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/30648/supplement/4967)

Lt Col P E Davidson, DSO

Lt Col W L Vale

**After the camp:** Teddesley Hall was demolished in 1954.

**Further Information:**

National Archives FO 939/179 – 194 Working Camp, Teddesley Hall Camp, Penkridge, Staffordshire. Dated 1945-1948. Used above.

IWM have copies of the camp newspaper January – March 1947. Catalogue LBY E.J. 411

**Numbers of pows**

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

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|  | 1944 | 11/1945 | 7/1946 | 8/1946 | 1/1947 | 4/1947 | 7/1947 | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 | 4/1948 |
| Council Houses |  | 870\* | 930\* | 620 | 389 | 397 | 436 |  |  |  |  |
| Teddesley |  | 1805 | 1616 | 1300\* | 998\* | 1055\* | 979\* | 711 | 682 | 882 (2) | 696 |
| Gnosall | With C 71 | 38 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Wolseley Road | Camp 96 | 596 | 268 |  |  |
| Armitage |  |  | With C 96 | 102 |  |  |  |
| Donnington |  | Camp 620 | 492 | 272 |
| Halfpenny Green |  |  |  | With C 151 | 153 | 100 |
| Hamstead |  |  | With C 151 | 85 | 31 |
| Mellish Road |  |  |  |  | With C151 | 69 | 33 |
| Sudbury | Camp 23 | 347 | 195 |
| Worfield |  | Camp 272 | With C 151 | 339 | 172 |
| Billets |  |  |  |  | 38 | 40 | 53 | 46 | ? | 92 | 33 |
| TOTALS |  | 2675 | 2546 | 1920 | 1478 (1) | 1500 | 1468 | 1455 | 950 | 2491 | 1532 |

\* Denotes which site was recorded as HQ. (1) Numbers are 15 short of total given. (2) + 32 detached.

**Hostels**

**Armitage.** A building rather than huts - within The Towers, Armitage; SK 079 157. Previously a hostel with Wolseley Road Camp 96.

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|  | 1944 | 11/1945 | 7/1946 | 8/1946 | 1/1947 | 4/1947 | 7/1947 | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 | 4/1948 |
| Armitage |  |  | With C 96 | 102 |  |  |  |

**Donnington.** Previously independent camp 620 (and other numbers). SJ 6971 1392.

4/1948 – Hostel leader; G Arndt (B)

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|  | 1944 | 11/1945 | 7/1946 | 8/1946 | 1/1947 | 4/1947 | 7/1947 | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 | 4/1948 |
| Donnington |  | Camp 620 | 492 | 272 |

**Gnosall** about 6 miles from Teddesley. Hutted. Previously with Sherrifhales Camp 71. Memories place it atSJ 829 211.

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|  | 1944 | 11/1945 | 7/1946 | 8/1946 | 1/1947 | 4/1947 | 7/1947 | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 | 4/1948 |
| Gnosall | With C 71 | 38 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Halfpenny Green.** Previously with Coven Lawn Camp 151. Approximate areafor RAF baseSO 823 910.

4/1948 – Hostel leader; A Heller.

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|  | 1944 | 11/1945 | 7/1946 | 8/1946 | 1/1947 | 4/1947 | 7/1947 | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 | 4/1948 |
| Halfpenny Green |  |  |  | With C 151 | 153 | 100 |

**Hamstead.** Previously with Coven Lawn Camp 151.Hamstead Colliery SP 044 930, alongside Hamstead Road.

4/1948 – Hostel leader; H Gehlen (B).

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|  | 1944 | 11/1945 | 7/1946 | 8/1946 | 1/1947 | 4/1947 | 7/1947 | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 | 4/1948 |
| Hamstead |  |  | With C 151 | 85 | 31 |

**Mellish Road.** Previously with Coven Lawn Camp 151. SP 031 993.

4/1948 – Hostel leader; A Seyearth (B)

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|  | 1944 | 11/1945 | 7/1946 | 8/1946 | 1/1947 | 4/1947 | 7/1947 | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 | 4/1948 |
| Mellish Road |  |  |  |  | With C151 | 69 | 33 |

**Sudbury.** Previously independent camp 23. SK 1596 3329.

4/1948 – Hostel leader; G Worlitz (B)

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|  | 1944 | 11/1945 | 7/1946 | 8/1946 | 1/1947 | 4/1947 | 7/1947 | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 | 4/1948 |
| Sudbury | Camp 23 | 347 | 195 |

**Wolseley Road,** (aka Rugeley). Hutted camp. Previously independent camp 96.

1/1948 – Satellite camp officer i/c; Capt Marsh, although pleasant and friendly, he did not agree with the aims of PID. He had been a pow in Germany during WW1.

Camp leader; Horst Baumann (B); “*a very good type.”* Deputy; Artur Heller (B); “*intelligent and genuine.”*

Morale was not good – the camp had had many difficulties in the past. The Commandant wanted to close the site down as soon as possible.

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|  | 1944 | 11/1945 | 7/1946 | 8/1946 | 1/1947 | 4/1947 | 7/1947 | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 | 4/1948 |
| Wolseley Road | Camp 96 | 596 | 268 |  |  |

**Worfield.** Previously independent camp 272, then hostel with Coven Lawn Camp 151.

4/1948 – Hostel leader; H Heyne (B)

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|  | 1944 | 11/1945 | 7/1946 | 8/1946 | 1/1947 | 4/1947 | 7/1947 | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 | 4/1948 |
| Worfield |  | Camp 272 | With C 151 | 339 | 172 |