**Camp 197** **The Mount Camp, Chepstow, Monmouthshire**

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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 |
|  |  | 197 | The Mount, Chepstow | Monmouthshire (Gwent) | Base Camp | Wales |  |

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| **‘The Mount’ appears to have been used as the postal address for 5 sites that were some distance apart in 1945. These sites often changed, some became independent camps, others were treated as hostels and were transferred to other camps.**  **Location:** For The Mount;ST 5291 9406. About 400m NW of Chepstow centre. Alongside the military hospital, part of which was Pow Camp 99.  **1944 –** Recorded as holding Italian pows.  **16 April 1945** – Suicide by hanging of pow Karl Lehmann (depression). He was buried at Beachley Military Cemetery.  **24 and 25 April 1945** – International Red Cross inspection – see below. This was before the end of the war so names of locations were not recorded. No mention of the ‘medical school’ which was recorded in 1946.  **1946** - Many pows arrived from camps in the US. Morale was low as they had expected to be returned to Germany.  **12 June 1946** - Record of German medical students transferred to Shugborough pow hospital; “*50 Medical students (advanced class) from the medical school at 197 camp.”*  **June 1946** - A large batch of pows were transferred to Camp 1020 Shooter’s Hill.  **Satellite Camps / Hostels.** These may have been some of the numbered sites in the 1945 IRC report.  **Bulwark** –  10/1946 – attached to Mardy Camp 118. Comments were made in an inspection report that when Bulwark was attached to The Mount, the Commandant would not co-operate with re-education and allowed ‘black’ (C grade) pows to become camp staff.  **Ross on Wye** – Conditions were described as “primitive.”  Transferred to Wynols Camp 61 in May 1946 with 130 German pows. |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1955 |

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| B/PFV/MBG Great Britain  PRISONERS OF WAR CAMP 197.  Visited April 24 & 25, 1945.  Address: German POW Camp 197, Great Britain.  Capacity: Camp 197/1 = 1500  Camp 197/2 = 1000  Camp 197/3 = 1450  Camp 197/4 = 1320  5270  Camp Strength on date of Visit:  Officers Protected Personnel  Camp 197/1 = 987 of which 2 21  Camp 197/2 = 845 “ “ - 25  Camp 197/3 = 1250 “ “ 1 28  Camp 197/4 = 1254 “ “ 4 16  Camp 197/Annexe = 211 “ “ - - .  4547 of which 7 90 .  Camp Leaders:  Camp 197/1: HISSCHER, Gerhard, ‘Hauptfeldwebel,’ 316714  Assistant: KLARENAAR, Rudolf, ‘Feldwebel,’ B 316718  Camp 197/2: LOSCH, Emil, ‘Oberfeldwebel,’ 540057  Assistant: MAIER, Heinrich, ‘Stabsfeldwebel.’ B216954  Camp 197/3: REIKERS, Werner, ‘Oberfeldwebel,’ 633825  Assistant RENTER, Richard, ‘Oberfaehnrich,’ 732884  Camp 197/4: HLAWAN, Hans, ‘Oberfeldwebel,’ B 317200  Assistant PRAWENETZ, Heiner, ‘Feldwebel,’ B 317099  Camp 197, Annexe: MOHNSANE, Fritz, ‘Stabsfeldwebel,’ 921331. |  | -2-  General Description of the Camp  The group of camps known as Camp 197 consists of five different self-contained POW camps, two close to each other on a race course, two a few miles away from the race course, and the fifth, a small camp (which may in the future be transferred) adjoining Camp 1.  1 CRS Hospital for all camps, situated in camp 1. (Camp Reception Station)  1 District V.D. Station, situated in Camp 197/4.  The camps, formerly used by allied troops, are hutted, electric-lighting and stove heating; with very few exceptions all POW were captured since D-Day.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Camp 197/1.  Camp 197/2.  Camp 197/3.  Camp 197/4.  Camp 197/Annexe | German POW Camp since 21.10.1944.  The men are accommodated in about 20 huts (with from 24 to 120 men per hut) and in a few race course buildings.  Adjoining Camp 197/1.  The camp lies in a hollow into which all the water from the site of camp 197/1 higher up, was formerly drained by allied troops. In consequence, the men in this camp had much drainage work to do, until everything was in order. The POW are accommodated in about 12 huts (18 to about 100 men per hut).  German POW camp since 26.1044.  The compound lies up on a hill, almost surrounded by residential houses, etc. Out of total of 46 huts, there are 36 in use as living huts.  German POW Camp since 9.11.44.  The camp is situated on a height about three miles from a small town.  Out of 16 huts, 12 are used for accommodation (about 100 men per hut). There are a number of artisan’s shops besides the usual tailor’s, barber’s and cobbler’s shops.  Only a few days old. There are 11 living huts and four other huts for kitchen, etc. Everything is still very temporary and building is in progress. It was formerly part of Camp 197/1, from which it is now separated by barbed wire. | |

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| - 3 –  Bedding At present the number of blankets per man is being reduced for German POW and British troops alike, so that in future the POW will have either two blankets, or, what is considered equal, one sleeping-bag.  All camps with the exception of camp 197/4 have still 1 blanket and 1 sleeping-bag. Camp 197/4 has now one sleeping-bag only.  Convention All camp leaders are in possession of the Convention.  Sanitary Installations With the exception of Camp 197/Annexe (pail-system) all latrines are water-borne and in sufficient number. Hot and cold shower-baths available.  Food No complaints of any description. Rations issued according to scale and in good quality.  Bills of fare on dates of visit: 24.4.45.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Camp 197/Annexe: |  | | Breakfast | ¼ Bread, Margarine, Ham, Tea. | | Dinner: | Pok with potatoes. | | Supper: | Milk soup, 1/5 Bread. | | Camp 197/1: |  | | Breakfast | Porridge, Milk, Sugar. | | Dinner: | Beans, Meat and Potatoes. | | Supper: | Tea, Milk, Bread, Margarine, Aspic jelly, Ham | | Camp 197/2: |  | | Breakfast | Porridge. | | Dinner: | 1/3 Bread, Stew, Vegetables. | | Supper: | ¼ Bread, Margarine, Sausage, Tea. | |  |  | | 25.4.45. |  | | Camp 197/3: |  | | Breakfast | Porridge, Bread, Marmalade. | | Dinner: | Meat and vegetable stew. | | Supper: | Bread, Cooked sausage, Tea. | |  | - 4 –   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Camp 197/4: |  | | Breakfast | Milk soup…… at 10 a.m. Marmalade, Bread. | | Dinner: | Mashed potatoes, Stew, Cauliflower. | | Lunch: | 1/3 Bread, Margarine, Cooked ham, Cheese knoedels, Tea |   In addition: Between 1400 and 1800 hours, cold tea ad lib.  Camp Infirmary The Infirmary of Camp 197/1 is at the same time the main Infirmary for all camps in the 197 group.  In every other camp, there is a small camp Infirmary, a number of unrecognised Protected Personnel work in the Infirmaries in addition to the paid Protected Personnel mentioned in camp strength.  Infirmary Camp 197/1 (known as camp Reception/C.R.S.) is in race-course buildings, the other infirmaries are in huts.  The V.D. Infirmary is situated in Camp 197/4.  All Infirmaries are well equipped, all amenities.  German Medical Officers  Camp 197/1 (Camp Reception station):  ULLMANN, Max, ‘Oberstabsarzt,’ A 446704  Responsible for Camp 197/1:  BLUMENTHAL, Werner, ‘Oberarzt,’ A 446808 (on date of visit sick in Hospital).  Camp 197/2:  KUHN, Alfred, ‘Stabsarzt,’ B 404936  Camp 197/3:  DEMILER, Willy, ‘Marine Stabsarzt,’ B 404977  Camp 197/4:  BACHMANN, Ludwig, ‘Oberarzt,’ A 446831  V.D. Station, Camp 197/4:  FEYE, Heinz, ‘Unterarzt,’ 512117. |

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| - 5 –  Medical Supplies: Sufficient in all camps.  General Medical Inspections: Once monthly in all camps.  Dental work: Carried out by German dental mechanics working under the official supervision of a British dental surgeon.  Average number of daily attendance at sick parade:   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Camp 197/1 =  “ 197/2 =  “ 197/3 =  “ 197/4 = | | | 7  7  30  10 | |  | | | Beds: | | C.R.S. and  Camp 197/1 | 197/2 | 197/3 | 197/4 | | V.D Station | | Total number: | | 82 | 12 | 10 | 26 | | About 30 | | Number of wards: | | 18 | 1 | 1 | 3 | | 2 | | In Race-course buildings | | | 1 hut | 2 huts | 1 hut | | 1 hut | | Number of beds occupied on day of visit: | | 52 | 8 | 6 | 10 | | 21 | | Total beds occupied: 97 | | | | | | | |   Cases in Camp-Infirmaries:   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Camp Reception Station and Camp 197/1: | |  | |  | Tonsilitis | 5 |  | |  | Bronchitis | 3 |  | |  | Influenza | 3 |  | |  | Enteritis | 2 |  | |  | Skin diseases | 11 |  | |  | Post-war recovery | 3 |  | |  | Inflammations | 4 |  | |  | Stomach and intestinal diseases | 7 |  | |  | Nervous diseases | 4 |  | |  | Throat, nose, and ears | 2 |  | |  | Rheumatic diseases | 5 |  | |  | Cystitis | 2 |  | |  | Total | 51 |  | |  |  |  |  | |  | - 6 –  V.D. Station (in Camp 197/4)  Syphilis 18  Gonorrhoea 3  Total 21  Camp 197/2:  Rheumatism 1  Legs and feet 1  Throat 1  Stomach 2  Boils 1  Total 6  Camp 197/3:  Ringworm both feet and cold 1  Great gland abscess 1  Psoriasis and Impetigo both legs 1  Meniscus injury 1  Angina and insanity 1  Effusion left knee 1  Total 6  Camp 197/4:  Angina 3  Otitis media 1  Burns 1  Bronchitis 2  Endocarditis 1  Acute joint rheumatism 1  Asthma bronchial 1  Total 10  In all camps:  Serious cases: none.  Contagious cases: none.  Epidemics: none.  Deaths: Suicide by hanging on 16.4.45 (depression).  Camp 197/3 LEHMANN, Karl. ‘Gefreiter,’ B 363783  Complaints: None.  Protected Personnel Walks: Permitted. |

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| - 7 –  General State of health of POW in all Camps in word of German medical officer:  Good.  General State of Nutrition of POW in all Camps in words of German medical  officer: Good.  Clothing and Uniforms  Issues complete in Camp 197/1 and Camp 197/4  Being completed in Camp 197/2 and Camp 197/3.  In possession of complete German uniform:   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Camp 197/1 = | 80% |  | |  | “ 197/2 = | 60% |  | |  | “ 197/3 = | 70% |  | |  | “ 197/4 = | 80% |  |   Labour A number of POW are employed on agricultural and other work in numbers as follows:   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Camp 197/1 = | 60 to 70 |  | |  | “ 197/2 = | 150 |  | |  | “ 197/3 = | 31 |  | |  | “ 197/4 = | 76 |  |   Payment received 3/ to 6/- a week.  Welfare funds   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Camp 197/1 = | ? |  | |  | “ 197/2 = | £32.-.- |  | |  | “ 197/3 = | £100.-.- |  | |  | “ 197/4 = | About £30.-.- |  |   Canteens There are small canteens in each camp.  Religious Activity  Camp chaplains:  Camp 197/1: Protestant: BRACKEMEIER, Heinrich, ‘San.Gefreiter,’ 602036  Roman catholic: None. |  | - 8 –  Camp 197/2: Protestant: HASSE, Johannes, ‘San.Unteroffizier,’ 602777  Roman catholic: none  Camp 197/3: Protestant: SCHOSTER, Alfons, ‘Obergefreiter,’ 317792  Roman Catholic: von SCHOENBECK Johann, ‘Obergefreiter,’ 317345  Camp 197/4: Protestant: BOERNER, Arthur, ‘San.Obergefreiter,’ 602248.  Protestant Services:  Camp 197/1: Services every Sunday in a big hut.  Camp 197/2: In chapel-hut, Services every Sunday attended by about 240 Protestants and Roman-catholics together.  1 prayer meeting a week.  Daily morning prayers, attendance 30 to 40.  Camp 197/3: Services every Sunday in chapel-hut, attendance about 180.  1 lecture a week “ “ 60  1 Bible class a week “ “ 30  Daily prayer meeting “ “ 30  Camp 197/4: Services every Sunday in chapel-hut, attendance about 300  Bible class once a week “ “ 60  Lecture “ “ “ “ 250 to 300  Daily prayer meeting “ “ 50  Services, Roman-catholic  Camp 197/3 and camp 197/4:  Daily mass, Sunday services and 4 evening Services a week in Camp 197/3.  Sunday Service and one weekday Service in Camp 197/4.  Camp Libraries   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Camp 197/Annexe: | 30 books (including a few schoolbooks) | | |  | Camp 197/1: | 130 “ |  | |  | “ 197/2: | 100 “ |  | |  | “ 197/3 = | 115 “ |  | |  | “ 197/4 = | 100 “ |  | |  | Total | 475 |  | |

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| Educational Activity   |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Classes | Pupils | | | | | | Subjects | | 197/1 | 197/2 | 197/3 | 197/4 | | English | | 115 | 120 | 300 | 175 | | French | | - | 58 | 40 | 15 | | German | | - | 60 | 50 | 55 | | Latin | | - | - | 15 | 10 | | Spanish | | - | - | 15 | - | | Mathematics | | 65 | 18 | - | 59 | | Algebra | | - | 27 | 25 | - | | History | | 146 | - | 100 | - | | Chemistry | | 45 | - | 30 | 16 | | Geometry | | 52 | - | - | - | | Literature | | 99 | - | - | - | | Physics | | 41 | - | - | 74 | | Shorthand | | 38 | 84 | 50 | - | | Farming | | 98 | - | - | 95 | | Architecture | | 28 | - | - | - | | Electrotechnic | | 23 | - | - | - | | Mechanics | | - | 11 | - | - | | Building | | - | 8 | - | - | | Theory of music | | - | - | 15- | - | | Forestry and hunting | | - | 13 | - | - | | Hunting | | - | - | - | 25 | | Hotel keeping | | - | - | 50 | - | | Commercial arithmetic | | - | - | 85 | 28 | | Law | | - | - | 80-100 | - | | Chess | | - | - | 200 | - | | Typewriting | | - | - | - | 35 | | Geography | | 96 | - | - | 110 | | Arithmetic | | 40 | 72 | 30 | 55 | | Commercial subjects | | 64 | - | - | - | | Management | | - | - | - | 39 | | Workmanship arithmetic | | - | - | - | 20 | | Primitive History | | - | - | - | 75 | | Botanical-Zoological | | - | - | - | 35 | | Ornithology | | - | - | - | 17 | | Integral arithmetic | | - | - | - | 10 | | German history | | - | - | - | 190 | | Advanced forestry | | - | - | - | 16 |   Camp 197/4: Special classes for education of regular (professional) soldiers:  Subjects: English, German, History, National politics, Book-keeping, Arithmetic, Literature, mathematics, Geography. |  | - 10 –  Number of pupils: 25 Number of teachers: 7  Director of studies:  Camp 197/1: OBITZ, Arthur, ‘Oberfeldwebel,’ B316790  Camp 197/2: JESSEN, Hans, ‘Feldwebel,’ B216819  Camp 197/3: von LEWINSKI, Paul, ‘Obergefreiter,’ B 39680  Camp 197/4: WITTHOF, Peter, ‘Grenadier,’ B317900  Most of the teaching is done without textbooks for teachers or pupils and with negligible teaching material (blackboards, chalk, etc.). Teachers and pupils have shown considerable ingenuity in procuring the little material available (blackout material for blackboards, W.C. paper and backs of labels, etc, for exercise books).  Lectures on general subjects.  Camp 197/3: 2 lectures weekly. Average number of attendance: 500.  Film shows  Camp 197/1 and Camp 197/2 so far none. Have been arranged for Camps 197/3 and 197/4, one film show up to the present.  Radio  Not installed in any of the camps.  Sport  Football is played in all camps, either on pitches inside the compounds or outside. Players plus a certain number of spectators are allowed out under guard.  There is one football per camp available. Camp 197/4 has 3 footballs. Further, boxing, wrestling and jui-jitsu clubs exist in camp 197/4.  Music and Theatricals   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Instruments |  |  |  | | Camp 197/1 | Camp 197/2 | Camp 197/3 | Camp 197/4 | | 2 violins | 1 violin | 1 accordion | 1 violin | | 1 guitar (self made) | 1 guitar | 1 piano (lent) | 1 guitar | | 1 mandolin (self made) |  |  | 1 recorder. | | 1 accordion |  |  |  | | 1 trumpet |  |  |  | |

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| - 11 –  Camp choirs (number of members)   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Camp 197/1 | Camp 197/2 | Camp 197/3 | Camp 197/4 | | Folksongs | 55 | 60 | 56 | 80 | | Special | 10 | - | 8 | 40 | | Theatre groups (number of members | | | | | |  | 30 | 15 | 16 | 14 |   Correspondence  Very little mail has been received addressed to the camp itself. Most of the recipients are POW who have been in other camps or hospitals before being transferred to 197.   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Letters | | Postcards | Parcels | |  | forwarded | direct |  | All forwarded | | Camp 197/1 | About 120 | 22\* | 0 | 0 | | Camp 197/2 | “ 100 | 0 | 0 | 1 | | Camp 197/3 | “ 44 | 6 | 0 | 1 | | Camp 197/4 | “ 60 | 3 | 0 | 1 | | Total | 324 | 31 | 0 | 3 |   \* Of these 20 from Switzerland. Parcels: all individual  Complaints None at all.  Escapes  Camps 197/1 and 197/2 : None  Camp 197/3: In December 1944:  1 man away for 1 day.  1 man away for 3 days.  Camp 197/4: 4.2.45: 3 men away for 3 hours  10.2.45: 1 man caught in wire  Discipline In Camps 197/1, 2 and 3 reported as good and in Camp 197/4 as very good.  Requests A number of minor requests were brought to the notice of the Camp Commandant.    All Camp leaders desire for their camps: |  | - 12 –  Educational books of every description especially those which can be made use of for the existing classes.  Musical instruments  Games and playing cards  Articles for sport and gymnastics, indoor and outdoor, including footballs, etc.  For camp choirs: Books of folksongs, classical songs, musical scores for ‘Double Quartet,’ etc.  For camp orchestra: musical scores of every description, classical, popular, dance-music for orchestras and for single instruments such as violins, piano, guitars, etc.  Musical scored paper.  For educational activity in all camps:  Blackboard, chalk, white and coloured (urgent)  Exercise books  Pencils and India rubbers.  Coloured crayons.  Individual requests of camp leaders:  Camp 197/1:  Sets of strings for violins, self made guitar and mandolin (urgent)  Needles for sewing machine W726 Singer 31.K.15 (not obtainable in neighbourhood).  Camp 197/3  Chess text-books (in particular charts) any language.  Books on navigation (for a new class).  Books on mechanics, electrotechnics, farming, mathematics, Spanish.  A slide rule.  For shorthand class: Debate shorthand, Russian textbook (for new class).  Camp 197/4  Seeds (any kind).  Requests of Camp Chaplains:  The Roman-catholic Chaplain desires:  Works on theology (dogmatics and moral)  History of the Catholic church (German and/or English)  An harmonium  Catholic soldiers’ prayerbooks.  Rosaries. |

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| - 13 –  Requests of Protestant Chaplains:  Camp 197/1  Hymnbooks  Camp 197/3  Hymnbooks  Bibles and New Testaments  Pencils and writing paper  An harmonium for Chapel  Any kind of works on Theology.  Camp 197/4  Any kind of works on Theology suitable for lessons or lectures.  Hymnbooks  Bibles and New Testaments  A Greek New Testament  In English, History of the Church  An harmonium for Chapel  Classical music-scores for piano.  The medical officers desire:  Camp Reception Station: Books on surgery and internal medicine.  Camp 197/2: Books on Skin diseases and pharmacology.  Camp 197/3: Books on Skin diseases and textbook of surgery.  Gifts from German Red Cross  Here and in other camps, calendars etc. received were very much appreciated. The pictures hang framed in dining-huts, officers- and men’s quarters and are a constant source of pleasure. Further pictures from Germany would be very welcome.  General Impression  Excepting Camp 197/Annexe which is starting from scratch, all camps show much work done by the POW to make their camps look brighter. Flower-beds, ornaments, etc. have been laid out, drainage ditches built and work of this description is still being carried on.  Larger scale work, however, cannot be carried out in Prisoner of War Camps in this respect, as the authorities have, |  | - 14 –  in order to prevent escapes (tunnelling) to impose certain restrictions on tools used, and the number of tools issued daily. Were unlimited supplies available, camps of this description would very soon be turned into real garden-cities. It is, therefore, remarkable what has and is being done in spite of the aforementioned limited supply.  The Camp Commandant permits walks of the POW and groups are regularly taken out under escort. This privilege helps greatly to improve the lot of the POW, and is, of course, very much appreciated.  On the whole, the camp group 197 can be classed as an exceptionally good one. |
| **After the camp:** Boarding school. Grade II listed building. 2020 residential.  **Further Information:** |