**Camp 239 Shirley Church Road Camp, Addington, Surrey**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1947 Camp list** | | | | | | | |
| 239(G.W.C.) | Weston Acres, Woodmansterne, Banstead, Surrey | L.D. | Priswar, Banstead | Burgh Heath 3981 | Banstead | Lt.Col.H.St.G.Thoyts, M.C. | v/1453/2 |
| The entry above has been crossed out in blue crayon and the following details handwritten on. | | | | | | | |
|  | *Shirley Church Road, Addington, Croydon, Surrey* |  | *Croydon* | *Spring Park 2296/7* | *East Croyden* | *R.H. McGeorge* |  |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Location:** Recorded as being in and around the Golf Clubhouse off Shirley Church Road, Addington. Not confirmed.  **Before the camp:**  **Pow Camp:** The camp number was previously used by the Weston Acres pow camp up to 1947.  **1947** – listed as a hostel called Addington, with Newlands Camp 125. It then became independent camp 239. The Shirley Church Road site was the administrative centre with a small number of permanent staff accommodated there. Most pows lived in the satellite camp and hostels.     |  | | --- | | 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. |   **20 October 1947** – Re-educational Survey. Strength; 3 officers, 1248 Other Ranks.  This was the 4th report, however the previous 3 are not in the National Archive file. |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1961 |

Commandant: Lt Col McGeorge Camp leader: Fw Nuernberg (B-)

Interpreter: Capt Hilton Deputy C/L: Schicht (B+)

S/Sgt Goodman German M.O.: St Arzt Hausmann (B-) / Ass.Arzt Bertlich (A)

The 2 interpreters had held that position at Weston Acres Camp 239.

Camp leader Nuernberg had been leader at Weston Acres. At first regarded as temporary, he; “*turned out satisfactory, and is well thought of by the Commandant.”*

Deputy leader Schicht had been leader at Weston Acres Camp 239.

The German M.O.’s Obarzt Dr Hausmann (B) had been based at Banstead / Dr Bertlich (A) was based at Staines.

Simplified screening figures given: A 3 / B 1248. 170 pows repatriated to date.

Speedier repatriations improved morale. Pows resented any military discipline and restrictions.

Relationships with the public were generally good. At Whitton a bus conductor refused to take a pow. The pow appealed to the passengers who voted for him unanimously. The pow and passengers then transferred to another bus. The Alcazar Cinema at Hounslow had recently refused to admit pows acting on orders from the film distributing company.

40-60% of the pows were ‘youth,’ (under 25). They were not regarded as a problem.

The was a general indifference to re-education activities, with pows preferring to walk out of camp in their free time. The standard list was given:

Newspapers – Only the weekly Times and Manchester Guardian received due to lack of funds. Some papers were passed on by the British staff and obtained when pows went out. German and Swiss papers were received.

Library – Good at Banstead, adequate elsewhere. Books were being received from the International Red Cross.

Lectures – very mixed response. At Staines no-one turned up to one lecture.

Discussion groups – none.

Films – YMCA and Travelling Films on alternate weeks except at Chessington and Whitton where only YMCA attended.

Wireless – Adequate at Banstead and Staines. Chessington and Whitton did not have loudspeakers.

Camp Magazine – ‘Das Fenster’ published from Banstead.

Press review – Only news summaries in the German press.

English instruction – only 1 class at Staines.

Information room – showing text and picture exhibitions on a theme. ‘Politische Karikatur’ and ‘Kultureller Wiederaufbau Deutschlands’ shown recently.

Other camp activities –

Religion – Protestant padre at Banstead; Soyeaux (A). No RC padre.

Education – No classes.

Entertainment – a very unusual comment; “*There is little interest in football…”* All hostels had table tennis facilities.

Outside contacts – Apart from informal contacts, formal links had been established at:

Heston, Isleworth and Staines Councils / Salvation Army band / Society of Friends

**20-23 and 26-27 January 1948** – Re-educational Survey. Strength; 3 officers, 1013 OR.

1 change to senior personnel; S/Sgt Goodman had been demobilised. Captain Hilton was regarded as; “*the outstanding personality*.”

The Commandant was regarded as; “*strict but fair*.”

Screening figures: A 3 / B 1013.

Good morale with speedier repatriations. Pows from the Russian zone often received bad news and many were told by relatives not to return.

Changes to activities –

Camp magazine – formerly issued monthly, then changed to bi-monthly.

Press reviews – held at Banstead and Staines.

Library – very good with 4000 books. Pows able to use the public libraries at Beckenham and Staines.

Films – Travelling Films only visited the large hostels. They were getting low numbers following a price increase from 6d to 9d, and pows were able to attend local cinemas for the same price. The Empire Cinema at Staines refused admission to pows with no reason given.

Religion – Attendance at church services was about 20%. Padre Eckert gave weekly religious talks at Ravensbourne and visited the hostels.

Outside contacts –

Informal; Approximately 35% of the camp had been issued 48 hours passes over Christmas to visit local families – and the majority of the remainder had invitations for Christmas Day or Boxing Day.

The Society of Friends organised visits to London and Parliament for groups of pows. There was a justifiable complaint that pows working outside were not allowed to take a day off work to attend these visits, even though they were prepared to lose a day’s pay.

Council meetings had been attended at Croydon, Staines, Kingston and Bromley.

Labour Party meetings had been attended by pows from Ravensbourne.

**8-11 March 1948** – “*Final impression… and Re-educational Survey.”* Strength; 3 officers, 620 OR.

There was no deputy leader. A new German M.O. Dr Kreussler.

228 pows repatriated during February.

A survey was conducted in camps still open at this time concerning pow attitudes to the British, (following a PID circular dated 25.2.1948). 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 this camp the visitor stated that he made an; “*estimate of the feelings.”* For what it is worth (nothing?) the results for this camp were:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Attitude towards Britain: | Hate and dislike | Distrust | Indifference | Liking |
|  | 2% | 25% | 35% | 38% |

The camp closed soon after this report.

Known Camp Commandants:

1947 Lt Col R H McGeorge.

**After the camp:**

**Further Information:**

National Archives - FO 1120/234 – ‘Re-educational survey visit reports for camps 236 to 239’. Used above.

**POW NUMBERS**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Open |  |  | With other camps |  |  | Unknown |  |  | Not open |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Previous | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 |
| HQ |  | 36 | 62 | 61 |
| Banstead | With Weston Acres C239 | 228 | 238 | 310 |
| Chessington | 71 | 64 |  |
| Whitton | 73 | 97 |  |
| Staines | 298 | 229 | 28 |
| Croydon | With Newlands C125 | 40 | 65 |  |
| Ravensbourne | 505 | 261 | 224 |
| Billets | / | ? | ? | ? |
| TOTALS |  | 1251 | 1016 | 623 |

**Hostels**

**Banstead.** Previously with Weston Acres Camp 239.

**10/1947** – Hostel leader; Uffz Schiller (B+), had been leader when attached to Weston Acres.

**1/1948** – Hostel leader; Fw Willi Mueller (B). **3/1948** – same leader.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Previous | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 |
| Banstead | With Weston Acres C239 | 228 | 238 | 310 |

**Chessington.** Previously with Weston Acres Camp 239

**10/1947** – Hostel leader; Fw Nowak (B+), had been leader when attached to Weston Acres. A local clergyman, Mr Elliott, brought film shows to the hostel. **1/1948** – same leader.

**14 March 1948** – closed.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Previous | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 |
| Chessington | With Weston Acres C239 | 71 | 64 |  |

**Croydon**

**October 1947** – listed as having been attached to Newlands Camp 125.

**1/1948** – Hostel leader; Karl Hutzelmann (B)

**21 March 1948** – closed.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Previous | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 |
| Croydon | With Newlands C125 | 40 | 65 |  |

**Ravensbourne.** Previously independent ‘Summer House’ Camp 233. Then attached to Co-ed Bel Camp 237 and Newlands Camp 125.

At first listed as a satellite camp; officer i/c Capt Dunbar.

**1/1948** – Reduced in status to a hostel, and Capt Dunbar was no longer in charge. Sgt Watkins was the new NCO in charge, he was unpopular and accused of bullying – he had been transferred from Banstead where similar allegations had been made. Hostel leader; Heinz Huehn (B); “*intelligent and efficient.”*

There was poor electric supply to the camp which often limited films shown and the use of the wireless.

Quakers provided a piano and a billiard table.

**3/1948** – same leader.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Previous | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 |
| Ravensbourne | With Newlands C125 | 505 | 261 | 224 |

**Staines,** Billet Road.Previously with Weston Acres Camp 239

**10/1947** – Hostel leader; Uffz W Meller (B+), had been leader when attached to Weston Acres. He had deferred his repatriation and did not intend to return to Germany. There was a small orchestra which also played at St.Peter’s Hall in Staines. Football matches played against local teams. **1/1948** – same leader.

Due to close on 12 March with pows transferred to Banstead.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Previous | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 |
| Staines | With Weston Acres C239 | 298 | 229 | 28 |

**Whitton.** Previously with Weston Acres Camp 239

**10/1947** – Hostel leader; Ofw Kressner (A), had been leader when attached to Weston Acres. Issues arising within the hostel had been resolved when the British NCO i/c was removed.

A local news reporter published an article describing the hostel and stating that pows would like to meet more local people – this received many invitations.

**1/1948** – Hostel leader; Karl Raquet (B+). The previous leader was deposed by the Commandant for being inefficient.

**7 March 1948** – closed.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Previous | 10/1947 | 1/1948 | 3/1948 |
| Whitton | With Weston Acres C239 | 73 | 97 |  |