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Stalag VII-A

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Stalag VII-A (in full: *Kriegsgefangenen-Mannschafts-Stammlager VII-A*) was [Germany's largest prisoner-of-war camp](#)

Stalag VII-A

Moosburg, Bavaria

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Germany's largest prisoner-of-war camp during [World War II](#), located just north of the town of [Moosburg](#) in southern [Bavaria](#). The camp covered an area of 35 hectares (86 acres). It served also as a transit camp through which prisoners, including officers, were processed on their way to other camps. At some time during the war, prisoners from every nation fighting against Germany passed through it. At the time of its liberation on 29 April 1945, there were about 80,000 prisoners in the camp, mostly from France and the Soviet Union.^[1] Many others were billeted in *Arbeitskommando* working in factories, repairing railroads or on farms.^[2]

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ID tag as worn by POWs. Name and service number are on the brown disc.



Camp history [[edit](#)]

The camp was opened in September 1939^[3] and was designed to house up to 10,000 [Polish](#) prisoners from the German [September 1939 offensive](#). The first prisoners arrived while the wooden barracks were under construction and for several weeks lived in tents.^[1]

[British](#), [French](#), [Belgian](#) and [Dutch](#) soldiers taken prisoner during the [Battle of France](#) started arriving in May 1940. Many were transferred to other camps, but close to 40,000 French remained at Stalag VII-A throughout the war.

[British](#), [Greek](#) and [Yugoslavian](#) prisoners arrived from the [Balkans Campaign](#) in May and June 1941. A few months later [Soviet](#) prisoners started arriving, mostly officers. At the end of the war there were 27 Soviet generals in the prison.

More [British Commonwealth](#) and Polish prisoners came from the [North African campaign](#) and the offensive against the Italian-held islands in the [Mediterranean](#). They were brought here from [Italian](#) PoW camps after the [Armistice with Italy](#) in September 1943, including many who escaped at that time and were recaptured. Italian soldiers were also imprisoned.

The first [American](#) arrivals came after the [Tunisia Campaign](#) in December 1942, and the [Italian Campaign](#) in 1943. Large numbers of Americans were captured in the [Battle of the Bulge](#) in December 1944.

Among the last arrivals were officers from [Stalag Luft III](#) who had been force-marched from Sagan in [Silesia](#) (now [Żagań](#)), [Poland](#)).^[4] They arrived on 2 February 1945. They were followed by more



Coordinates [48.4887°N 11.9435°E](#)

Type Prisoner-of-war camp

Site information

Controlled by  [Nazi Germany](#)

Site history

In use 1939-1945

prisoners marched from other camps threatened by the advancing Soviets, including part of the American officers that had been marched from [Oflag 64](#) in [Szubin](#), via [Oflag XIII-B](#), under their senior officer Lt.Col. Paul Goode.

During the 5½ years about 1,000 prisoners died at the camp, over 800 of them Soviets. They were buried in a cemetery in Oberreit, south of Moosburg. Most died from illness, some from injuries during work. It has been said that there were some casualties from Allied bombs at work sites.^[citation needed]

On 1 August 1942 Major Karl August Meinel was shifted into the [Führerreserve](#), because on 13 January 1942 he wrote a critical report to General [Hermann Reinecke](#) on the segregation and execution of Russian prisoners of war in Stalag VII-A by the Gestapo and the [Sicherheitsdienst](#) SD (security service) of the Reichsführer SS ([Heinrich Himmler](#)).^[5]

Liberation ^[edit]

Stalag VII-A was liberated on 29 April 1945 by Combat Command A of the [14th Armored Division](#). A German proposal for an armistice was rejected, followed by a short, uneven battle between the American tanks and retreating German soldiers for control of bridges across the [Amper](#) and [Isar](#) rivers. The German contingent included "remnants of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier and 719th Infantry Divisions...who had no tanks or antitank guns, and were armed only with small arms, machine guns, mortars, and panzerfausts".^[6] Large numbers surrendered, as did the camp's 240 guards. The American force learned of the existence of the camp and its approximate location only a few hours before the attack. Because so many Allied POWs were in the area, the U.S. artillery, a major factor in any attack, was ordered not to fire, and remained silent during the attack.^[6]

According to official German sources, there had been 76,248 prisoners at the camp in January 1945.^[1]

Aftermath [edit]

After the liberation Stalag VII-A was turned into Civilian [Internment Camp #6](#) for 12,000 German men and women suspected of criminal activity for the Nazi regime. Later the camp was turned into a new district of the town called *Moosburg-Neustadt*.^[1] One of the old huts has been restored.^[citation needed]

A [memorial](#) to inmates of Stalag VII-A was built. It is a fountain located in the center of Neustadt. It consists of four [bas-reliefs](#) created out of local stone by the French sculptor Antoniucci Volti while he was a prisoner in the camp.^[7]

In 1958 the Oberreit cemetery was closed. 866 bodies were exhumed and reburied at the military cemetery in Schwabstadel near Landsberg. The bodies of 33 Italians were reburied at the Italian Memorial Cemetery near Munich. In 1982 the Moosburg City Council purchased a plot at the site of the old Oberreit cemetery and erected a wooden cross with a simple stone remembering the dead of Stalag VII-A.^[8]

Notable prisoners [edit]

- [Robert M. Polich, Sr.](#)^[9]
- [Derek Bond](#), M.C, Grenadier Guards
- [Alexander Jefferson](#)

See also [edit]



Barack 3 of the guard of Stalag VII-A ↗
in 2013

- [List of prisoner-of-war camps in Germany](#)
- [Stalag](#)
- [Karl von Eberstein](#) - SS officer who helped fire Meinel after he objected to POW killings
- [Gestapo](#) - responsible for 'screening' POWs to be murdered

References [\[edit\]](#)

1. ^{[^](#)} ^{[a](#)} ^{[b](#)} ^{[c](#)} ^{[d](#)} ["Stalag VII-A : History 1939-45"](#) ^{[↗](#)}. *Moosburg Online*. 2008. Retrieved 2 December 2011.
2. ^{[^](#)} ["Stalag VII-A Kommandos"](#) ^{[↗](#)}. *Moosburg Online*. 2011. Retrieved 2 December 2011.
3. ^{[^](#)} ["POW camp Stalag VII-A : Brief history"](#) ^{[↗](#)}. *Moosburg Online*. 2011. Retrieved 2 December 2011.
4. ^{[^](#)} Petersen, Quentin Richard (2011). ["The March : A Continuing Memoir"](#) ^{[↗](#)}. *World War II Living Memorial*. Retrieved 2 December 2011.
5. ^{[^](#)} Streim, Alfred (1982). *Sowjetische Gefangene in Hitlers Vernichtungskrieg: Berichte und Dokumente, 1941-1945* [*Soviet Prisoners in Hitler's War of Extermination : Reports and Documents, 1939-1945*] ^{[↗](#)} (in German). Heidelberg: C. F. Müller Juristischer Verlag. pp. 41–44. ISBN 978-3-8114-2482-1.
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7. ^{[^](#)} [The Stalag fountain in memory of the Moosburg POW camp](#) ^{[↗](#)} at Moosburg Online
8. ^{[^](#)} ["Stalag VII A Cemetery : Oberreit Memorial"](#) ^{[↗](#)}. *Thonstetten.de* (in German). 2004. Retrieved 2 December 2011.
9. ^{[^](#)} Rofidal, K. (2011). ["Red Leader On Fire"](#) ^{[↗](#)}. *Minnesota Historical Society*. Retrieved 2 December 2011.

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- Devaux, Roger (2007). *Treize qu'ils étaient : la vie des prisonniers de guerre français chez les*

paysans de basse Bavière 1940-1945 [*They Were Thirteen : The Lives of French prisoners of war among the peasants of Lower Bavaria, 1940-1945*] [↗](#) (in French). ISBN 2-916062-51-3.

- *Steady, Old Man! Don't You Know There's a War On?* (1990), Derek Bond, M.C., Leo Cooper (Pen & Sword),

External links [\[edit\]](#)

- [Diaries](#) [↗](#) by [Sapper Roger Collinson RE](#) whilst a prisoner of World War II, 1943 to 1945
- [The Wartime Memories Project : Stalag 7A POW camp](#) [↗](#)
- [Stoker Harold Siddall](#) [↗](#), RN, captured on Crete and his life in Stalag VII-A

V · T · E ·

Main German prisoner-of-war camps for Western Allied soldiers (1944–1945)

[Stalag Luft VI Heydekrug](#) · [Stalag Luft I Barth](#) · [Stalag Luft IV Gross Tychow](#) · [Stalag III-A Luckenwalde](#) · [Stalag IV-B Mühlberg](#) · [Oflag IV-C Colditz Castle](#) · **[Stalag VII-A Moosburg](#)** · [Oflag VII-B Eichstätt](#) · [Stalag VIII-A Görlitz](#) · [Stalag 344 Lamsdorf](#) · [Stalag VIII-B Teschen](#) · [Stalag Luft III Sagan](#) · [Stalag Luft 7 Bankau](#) · [Stalag IX-C Bad Sulza](#) · [Stalag X-B Sandbostel](#) · [Marlag und Milag Nord, Westertimke](#) · [Stalag XI-A Altengrabow](#) · [Stalag XI-B Fallingbostel](#) · [Stalag XIII-C Hammelburg](#) · [Stalag XIII-D Nürnberg](#) · [Stalag XX-A Thorn](#) · [Stalag XX-B Marienburg](#) · [Stalag XXI-D Posen](#) · [Oflag 79 Brunswick](#) ·

See also [The March \(1945\)](#) ·

Categories: [World War II prisoner of war camps in Germany](#)

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