



At the Werkstättenhof

successively left the barracks, Fünfeichen was used to house Soviet Secret Service prisoners. The registration roll indicates that there were 379 prisoners there on 9 June 1945 and the numbers soon grew. In mid-August, a convoy with over 1,700 prisoners who were being transferred from the former Sachsenhausen concentration camp arrived in Fünfeichen. Smaller intakes from various regions in the Soviet occupation zone and larger convoys arrived in subsequent years. In January 1946, for instance, more than 1,700 people arrived from the concentration camp in Graudenz, which is now in Poland, and another 1,500 arrived from Camp No. 5 in Ketschendorf after its closure. Further transfers followed. In February 1947 almost 700 prisoners who according to the occupying forces were in a fit state to work were deported to the Soviet labour camps, including the Stalinsk camp in Siberia.

At the end of the war, the city of Neubrandenburg faced massive shortages as a result of massive destruction and the vast numbers of refugees and displaced persons

there, and it was additionally hit by a typhoid epidemic in the late summer of 1945. The situation was dire for the supervisors of the special camp because there was little or no help provided by the city authorities. 4,900 of the 15,000 prisoners died in the years up to 1948 as a result of disease, starvation and nutritional deficiencies. Initially, they were buried in separate graves on the Nordfriedhof cemetery, but when the numbers of people dying escalated in winter, mass burials at the Südfriedhof cemetery started.

Throughout the entire period when the special camp existed, the Soviets could not agree on the prisoners' fate. There were regular rumours circulating the prisoners in the camp that they were going to be released soon. In the western zones, the internment camps had been closed in 1946 but it was not until July 1948 that the first prisoners in Fünfeichen were released. Between July and August 1948 almost 5,200 people were freed. The Soviet camp management's release commission forced the

prisoners to promise never to talk about their experiences in Fünfeichen, threatening them with punishment and being brought back if they did. Many of the prisoners kept this promise until the day they died. Over 2,800 people had to stay in the camp. Most of them were transferred to Special Camp No.

2 in Buchenwald, where they remained until they were released in 1950. 192 prisoners came to the Special Camp No. 7 in Sachsenhausen.

using the site as a secure military base without public access, so it fell into ruin.

Not all of the survivors of Special Camp No. 9 died during the GDR era. After the socio-political change in 1989, they broke their silence and talked about their experiences. In March 1990 a museum employee acting on the directions of one of the former prisoners found the mass graves. On 28 April 1991, the Fünfeichen Working Group was established with the objective of informing people about the injustices that took place and victims. Most of the founding members were former prisoners and former prisoners' relatives. Their objectives were to obtain information about the fate of missing persons and to honour the dead.

The city of Neubrandenburg and the Fünfeichen Working Group initiated the memorial's redesign and it was opened on 25 April 1993. It features a supported cross, the Working Group's symbol, and eleven oak pillars created by the artist Uwe Grimm, a bronze plaque by sculptor Walter Preik in the entrance area and eleven granite crosses with the years 1939 to 1948 engraved on them in memory of the people who died at the two prisoner camps in Fünfeichen. A model of the camp and a bell tower have since been added. The names of the persons who died at the camp have been displayed on a bronze plaque at the southern mass grave since 1999. This is one of the most important gestures for the families of the victims because their relatives now have a name again.

*NKVD (russ.) – Narodnyj komissariat vnutrennyh del – People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs

The camp's history after 1948



Bell tower



A view of the southern cemetery



A plaque with the names of prisoners who died at the camp

Between 1958 and 1960, the Neubrandenburg city council built a memorial for the prisoners of war who died on the site of the former camp cemetery. A bell

tower was created by sculptor Albert Braun and there was a park which was tended to by a resident gardener. However, the GDR's People's National Army continued



Fünfeichen Prisoner of War Camp

Imprint
Publisher:
Neubrandenburg City Council
The Mayor
Friedrich-Engels-Ring 53
17033 Neubrandenburg
Address:
PO Box 110255
17042 Neubrandenburg
Tel: 0395 555-0
Fax: 0395 555-2600
stadt@neubrandenburg.de
www.neubrandenburg.de

Neubrandenburg towns archives
Neubrandenburg Regional Museum
Fünfeichen Working Group
Dr. Rita Lüdtko Hopfenstraße 5a
17034 Neubrandenburg
rita.luedtke@neubrandenburg.de

Copy deadline:
April 2012

Layout/printing:
Steffen GmbH, Friedland

Print run:
1,000

Fig. title
Entrance to the Fünfeichen Memorial

Uncovering history
places of violence

The Fünfeichen Memorial on the south-eastern edge of Neubrandenburg is a place of grief and remembrance. Fünfeichen was originally an agricultural estate. It was bought from its Jewish owner Olga von Maltzahn by the Wehrmacht in 1938.

No further details of this transaction are known. The Wehrmacht planned to use the estate for military purposes. It was converted into barracks and tank training units were housed there during the Second World War.

Main Camp II A / Officers' Camp II E (September 1939 - end of April 1945)



Prisoners of war being marched through the city centre

Only two weeks after war broke out, the first Polish prisoners of war arrived in Neubrandenburg, where they were marched through the city centre to Fünfeichen. At this time, there was no prisoner of war camp as such in Fünfeichen. A provisional tent camp had to be built by the prisoners. It wasn't until late autumn that construction of the barrack buildings commenced. Main Camp II A - also called Stalag II A - was built for the lower ranks and the Officer Camp II E - or Oflag II E and later Oflag 67 - was built for the officers.

All prisoners of war held at Wehrmacht prison camps on German

territory were given ID tags. At least one personal ID card was created for each prisoner stating name, date of birth, height, state of health, origin, civil occupation and military rank. They also contained a photo and a fingerprint, as well as details of who to contact in the event of death. Until now, it has not been possible to obtain specific personal data from all the countries with citizens who were incarcerated in Fünfeichen but research continues. One project is particularly noteworthy. It is financed by federal government funds and is collating data on Soviet prisoners of war contained in the Podolsk Russian Military Archive for



Tent camp (admission area for Stalag III A, Luckenwalde)



Prisoners from African colonies



The burial of a French prisoner of war with military honours

research purposes. These prisoners suffered most of all in the German prisoner of war camps. Two thirds of them did not survive.

The prisoners of Stalag II A came from ten European countries, the French colonies and the USA. Verified data now exists as a result of archive research about the number of prisoners in each month of the war. It can be assumed that at least 70,000 people were incarcerated there during the war. The prisoners who died were buried at a cemetery around 500 metres south east of the camp. Approximately 500 bodies of Allied soldiers were buried here with all military honours. The approximately 6,000 dead Red Army soldiers were buried in

mass graves at this cemetery. Its location was not discovered until exploratory excavations were carried out there in November 2009.

On 28 April 1945, Red Army units arrived in Neubrandenburg from the south east. More than 80% of Neubrandenburg city centre was destroyed in the fighting between German and Soviet troops and a fire that was started by the Red Army on 29/30 April 1945, which created almost insurmountable supply and accommodation problems for the city's inhabitants. Several thousand additional civil refugees from eastern Germany exacerbated the already problematic situation.

The prisoners in Stalag II A and Oflag 67 were freed by the Red

Army. For the Red Army prisoners of war, this meant the continuation of the reprisals from their own compatriots. A few of the prisoners who were healthy enough had to go straight back to the front. At least 163 former prisoners of war remained in Fünfeichen. The Soviet Secret Service NKVD* incarcerated them as national

traitors and had them deported to Soviet labour camps between the end of 1945 and December 1946.

Repatriation Camp (May - September 1945)



Released prisoners on the grounds of the tank barracks

From the beginning of May to autumn 1945, the barracks and the nearby tank barracks were used as a repatriation camp for displaced persons. These people included former female prisoners of the Ravensbrück concentration camp who had been forced to work in the weapons industry at the MWN mechanical workshops in Neubrandenburg, several thousand civilians, mainly eastern European forced labourers and the released prisoners of war. There were also several thousands of former prisoners from other

camps in the region whose board, accommodation and repatriation had to be organised by the occupying forces. To date, the names of 750 people from the Czech Republic and Slovakia who were at this camp have been verified. There must have been several thousands of people there. Summer 1945 was a comparatively good time for the people in this place. The released men and women from various nations were happy to be experiencing the end of the war.

Special Camp No. 9 (June 1945 - November 1948)



View of the barracks

When the Red Army crossed the German border at the beginning of 1945, the Soviet Secret Service NKVD* also arrived in Germany. Carrying out order no. 0016 of 11 January 1945, they persecuted NS-affiliated people and people who had committed war crimes against humanity and put them in special prisons amidst the increasingly chaotic conditions as the end of the war approached in the Soviet occupation zone. These people included NSDAP activists, state leaders, mayors, lawyers, journalists, officials of fascist organisations such as the Bund Deutscher Mädchen (BDM) (German Girls Organisation) and the Hitler-Jugend (HJ) (Hitler Youth), concentration camp supervisors, members of the SS, SA and the Gestapo. These people were arrested in all of the occupation zones. However, in the Soviet occupation zone, other people were also arbitrarily arrested or fell into the hands of the occupying forces after being informed upon (e.g. young people who were accused

of acting as undercover agents). Most of the time, the people arrested had no idea of what they were guilty of. Even their relatives did not receive any official information about the reason why they had been arrested and their whereabouts. Then, the NKVD transported the prisoners to the camps that had until a short time previously been operated by the Wehrmacht and the SS so that they could be de-nazified and re-educated. But no re-education ever took place. The first arrests of people from Mecklenburg and Pomerania from early May 1945 onwards, who were then sent to the later Special Camp No. 9 in Fünfeichen, have been verified. They were initially taken to the former concentration camp on Ihlenfelder Strasse in Ravensbrück where the technical infrastructure was still in working order. From summer 1945 onwards, when the foreign displaced persons had