

AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN GERMANY
Prepared by MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, WAR DEPARTMENT 15 July 1944

DULAG LUFT

The name Dulag is a contraction of durchgangslager or entrance camp, but it has become synonymous with interrogation.

Dulag Luft has 3 sections: A hospital in Hohemark, (50°13' N.8°35' E.) an interrogation center in Oberursel, (50°13' N.8°35'E.) and a transit camp in Wetzlar, (50°33'N.8°30'E.) The latter installation supplants the transit camp formerly situated in the Botanical Gardens of Frankfurt-on-Main but destroyed in Allied bombings between 22 & 29 March. Hospital and interrogation center in Hohemark and Oberursel were not damaged and presumably are still in operation. The new transit camp, a former German flak troops camp 3 kilometers west northwest of Wetzlar, is 53 kilometers north of Frankfurt.

TREATMENT: Because Dulag Luft is an interrogation center, treatment varies with interrogation officers' analyses of their subjects. Sometimes it is deluxe, with wine, women and song. More often it is exceedingly harsh, with solitary confinement, little food and threats of physical violence.

FOOD: German ration is generally poor and Red Cross food parcels frequently are withheld in an effort to force Fs/W to give information.

CLOTHING: Red Cross stocks are issued to offset frequent confiscations of flyers' "pinks" and leather jackets as civilian garments.

HEALTH: Medical care and treatment were excellent but seem to be deteriorating, notably in the case of AAF NCO's who arrive in Stalag 17B from Dulag Luft wearing dirty bandages 2 & 3 weeks old. While Hohemark is a bona-fide hospital it appears to be primarily an adjunct of the interrogation center and wounded flyers rarely remain long. Those whose convalescence threatens to be protracted are interrogated and shipped to other hospitals before being sent to permanent camps.

RELIGION: No American chaplain is in this camp and Ps/W minister to their own needs. Hauptman Offerman, commandant of Hohemark, requires Ps/W to attend his nightly Bible readings.

PERSONNEL: American Senior Officer: Col. Darr H. Alkire, former ASO, has been transferred to Stalag Luft 3. 1st Lt. John H. Winant may be the new ASO.

GERMAN COMMANDANT: Oberstleutenant Becker.

INTERROGATION CHIEF: Major Kreuger.

MAIL: Only mail for permanent staff and patients in Hohemark is addressed to Dulag Luft. Outgoing letter clear slowly through censorship station in Stalag Luft 3, taking three months by surface and six weeks by airmail. Members of permanent staff and patients receive regular allotment of letter forms monthly. Occasionally, transients are permitted to write home.

RECREATION: Lack of sports field is not felt because most Ps/W are weak and tired or wounded.

WORK: None.

PAY: None.

AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN GERMANY
Prepared by MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, WAR DEPARTMENT, 1 November 1945

DULAG LUFT

INTRODUCTION: Dulag Luft, through which practically all air force personnel captured in German-occupied Europe passed, was composed Of 3 installations: the interrogation center at Oberursel, the hospital at Hohemark and the transit camp ultimately at Wetzlar.

INTERROGATION CENTER

LOCATION: Auswertestelle West (Evaluation Center West) was situated 300 yards north of the main Frankfurt-Homburg road and near the trolley stop of Kupforhammer – the third stop after Oberursel (50°12'N. 8°34"E). Oberursel is 13 kilometers northwest of Frankfurt-on-main.

STRENGTH: The number of PW handled rose from 1000 a month in late 1943 to an average monthly intake of 2000 in 1944. The peak month was July 1944 when over 3000 Allied airmen and paratroopers passed through Auswertestelle West. Since solitary confinement was the rule, the capacity of the camp was supposedly limited to 200 men, although in rush periods as many as 5 PW were placed in one cell. Strength on any given day averaged 250.

DESCRIPTION: The main part of the camp consisted of 4 large wooden barracks, 2 of which, connected by a passage and known to PW as the "cooler", contained Some 200 cells. These cells, 8' high, 5' wide & 12' long held a cot, a table, a chair and an electric bell for PW to call the guard. The third barrack contained administrative headquarters. The fourth building, a large "L" shaped structure housed the interrogating offices, files and records. Senior officers lived on the post; junior officers outside in a hotel. The commandant lived on a nearby farm. The entire camp was surrounded by a barbed-wire fence but was equipped with neither perimeter floodlights nor watchtowers.

U.S. PERSONNEL: Since POWs were held in solitary confinement, and only for limited periods of time, no U.S. staff existed.

GERMAN PERSONNEL: German personnel – all Luftwaffe – was divided into two main branches: Administrative and Intelligence. Under Intelligence came officers and interpreter NCOs actually taking part in the interrogations and other intelligence work of the unit. The total strength of this branch was 50 officers and 100 enlisted men. Administrative personnel consisted of one guard company and one Luftwaffe construction company, each consisting of 120 men. Some members of the staff were:

Oberstleutnant Erich Killinger:	Commandant
Major Boehringer:	Executive Officer
Major Junge:	Chief of Interrogation
Captain Schneidewindt:	Record Section Chief
Leutnant Böinghaus:	Political Interrogator

Later there were attached to the staff representatives of the General Luftzeugmeister's department, the General der Kampfflieger's section, the Navy and the S.S. Occasionally members of the Gestapo at Frankfurt were permitted to interrogate PW.

TREATMENT: The interrogation of Allied PW at the hands of Auswertestelle West personnel was "korrekt" as far as physical violence was concerned. An occasional interrogator, exasperated by polite refusals to give more than name, rank, serial number, or more occasionally, perhaps by an exceptionally "fresh" PW, may have lost his temper and struck a PW. It is not believed that this ever went beyond a slap on the face dealt in the heat of anger – certainly physical violence was not employed as a policy. On the other hand, no amount of calculated mental depression, privation and psychological blackmail was considered excessive.

Upon arrival, PW were stripped, searched, and sometimes issued German coveralls. At other times they retained the clothing in which they were shot down. Ail were shut up in solitary confinement cells and denied cigarettes, toilet articles and Red Cross food. Usually the period of confinement lasted 4 to 5 days, but occasionally a surly PW would be held in the "cooler" for the full 30 days permitted by the Geneva Convention as a punitive measure and Capt. William N. Schwartz was imprisoned 45 days. Interrogators often used threats and violent language, calling PW "murders of children" and threatening them with indefinitely prolonged solitary confinement on starvation rations unless they would talk. PW were threatened with death as spies unless they identified themselves as airmen by revealing technical information on some such subject as radar or air combat tactics. Confinement in an unbearably overheated cell and pretended shootings of "buddies" were resorted to in the early days. Intimidation yielded inferior results and the friendly approach was considered best by the Germans.

FOOD: Rations were 2 slices of black bread and jam with ersatz coffee in the morning, watery soup at midday, and 2 slices of bread at night. No Red Cross parcels were issued. PW could obtain drinking water from the guards.

HEALTH: As a rule, men seriously needing medical treatment were sent to Hohemark hospital. Those suffering from the shock of being shot down and captured received no medical attention, nor did the 50% suffering from minor wounds. Some PW arrived at permanent camps still wearing dirty bandages, which has not been changed at Oberursel even though their stay had been of 2 weeks' duration. Upon several occasions PW were denied the ministrations of either a doctor or medical orderly and there is at least one instance where a flyer with a broken leg was refused treatment of any sort until he had answered some of the interrogator's questions 4 days after his arrival.

CLOTHING: POWs received no Red Cross clothing. Instead they wore German fatigues or the uniforms in which they had been captured – minus leather jackets which were customarily confiscated.

WORK: NONE

PAY: NONE

MAIL: NONE

MORALE: There is little doubt that the living conditions were expressly designed to lower morale and to produce mental depression of the most acute kind. Still, due partially to briefings which acquainted them with Oberursel and partially to their innate sense of loyalty, most PW successfully withstood the harsh treatment and yielded no important military information other than name, rank and serial number.

WELFARE: Neither the Protecting Power, which was refused admission for a long time, nor the Red Cross nor the YMCA could do anything to ameliorate the condition of PW in the interrogation center.

RELIGION: NONE

RECREATION: NONE

LIBERATION: On 25 April 1945 American troops overran Oberursel. They found Auswertestelle West no longer a going concern. Some 10 days earlier, its departments already widely dispersed over what remained of Germany; the installation had ceased to exist even as a headquarters of the German Air Interrogation service. Its records had been burnt or evacuated and its leading personalities, taking with them what remained of their organization, had fled to a new site at Nurnberg-Buchenbuhl. The new Dulag headquarters at Nurnberg did not survive the parent unit by many days. It was not long before Oberstleutnant Erich Killinger, the commandant, was discovered by Allied interrogators in an army cage. With the former roles of captive and interrogator now so completely reversed, it was a slightly apprehensive but stubborn Killinger who accompanied his captors back to the scene of his former triumphs at Oberursel.