

7 Concentration Camp Atrocities

Dachau Concentration Camp and its Sub-Camps

Dachau concentration camp was the first concentration camp to be opened by the National Socialist (Nazi) government on 22 March, 1933. It was situated northeast of the town of Dachau, some 10 miles north of Munich in Bavaria, in the grounds of an abandoned munitions factory. It was constructed on the orders of Heinrich Himmler initially to hold up to 5,000 political prisoners, especially German Communists and Social Democrats. Management of the camp was taken over by the SS on 11 April, 1933.

A major enlargement programme commenced in 1937 using forced labour. This was completed by August 1938.

During World War II Dachau was used to house prisoners from occupied countries, especially Poland, in 32 barracks, including one solely for clergy.

Over its 12 year existence as a concentration camp, 206,206 prisoners were sent to Dachau and 31,951 deaths were recorded there and there were undoubtedly more that went unrecorded. Crematoria were constructed to dispose of the bodies. The crematorium area, adjacent to the main camp also had a firing range and a gallows for executions.

During the spring of 1942, between 6,000 and 8,000 Russian prisoners were shot.

Various experiments were carried out on prisoners, including subjecting them to sudden changes in air pressure, immersion in cold water for long periods, forcing them to drink salt water over a period of five days and infecting prisoners with malaria. These inmates were used as guinea-pigs for research which was intended to be beneficial for German soldiers. The air pressure experiments were to study the effects on airmen who had to bail out at high altitudes. The cold water and salt water experiments were for the benefit of airmen ditching in the sea. The malaria experiment was to help soldiers serving in the Africa corps.

As of 22 April, 1945, the camp held 65,613 prisoners, comprising 5,656 German nationals, 14,053 Poles, 1,862 Czechs, 12,363 Russians, 3,322 Italians, and 13,357 of various other nationalities, according to the witness statement of a Polish prisoner named Cieslik, who worked in the camp records office.

Jules Jost, an inmate and priest from Luxembourg, registered almost 29,000 prisoners kept at the 14 Kaufering sub-camps of which eleven were numbered Kaufering I to Kaufering XI. They were situated some three miles north of Landsberg am Lech up to 9 March 1945. Three huge subterranean bunkers were built here for the production of the Messerschmitt jet fighter Me 262, as their factories in Augsburg had been heavily bombed. This project was known as "Ringeltaube" = wood pigeon.

Only about 15,000 inmates survived to be liberated by the US army on 27 April 1945.

In addition there were another 112 camps elsewhere, set up to provide forced labour for arms production.

On 24 April, 1945, some 6,000 to 7,000 inmates were evacuated and forced on a "death march" to Eurasburg and on to Tegernsee. A mass grave containing 1,071 bodies was later discovered along the route. The survivors were liberated by US soldiers on 2 May, 1945.

Dachau was liberated by US 7th Army on 29 April, 1945. They found the main camp and its sub-camps were grossly overcrowded and the conditions horrific. They also discovered some 50 railway wagons containing piles of corpses.

Everything was inadequate, especially food, clothing, accommodation and medical treatment for the inmates. US soldiers discovered huge numbers of malnourished and ill prisoners. Between 2 May and 6 June, 1945 they treated some 10,500 inmates for malnutrition and illness. From 9 May to 9 June, 1945, some 100 people a day were dying from typhoid, dysentery and malnutrition. Altogether around 15,000 people were killed by typhoid between December 1944 and April 1945.

By October 1945, the US authorities had set up a court room at Dachau to try war criminals under the authority of the Judge Advocate General's Department of the US Third Army. Over a period of nearly three years this court held 489 separate trials. 1,416 defendants were convicted, of whom 297 were sentenced to death and 279 to life in prison, with 840 receiving lesser prison terms and 256 being acquitted. All of those convicted were sent to Landsberg am Lech prison to serve their sentence. 40 men were hanged for crimes committed at Dachau and its sub-camps.

A generic charge was typically brought, that read as follows:

Defendants' names, "acting in pursuance of a common design to commit acts hereinafter alleged, and as members of staff of Dachau Concentration Camp and camps subsidiary thereto did wilfully, deliberately and wrongly encourage, aid, abet and participate in the subjection of civilian nationals of nations then at war with the German Reich to cruelties and mistreatment, including killings, beatings, tortures, starvation, abuses and indignities, the exact names and numbers of such civilians being unknown but aggregating many thousands who were then and there in the custody of the German Reich in exercise of belligerent control".

The exact details of the individual's crime would then follow.

The first trial was of 42 members of the staff at Dachau. It took place from 15 November to 13 December, 1945. (United States of America v. Martin Gottfried Weiss et al., case no. 000-50-02). The eight man Military Tribunal was presided over by Brigadier General John Lenz. The chief prosecutor was Lt. Col. William Denson. The defense team was led by Lt. Col. Douglas Bates. All defendants were found guilty on two separate charges of Violation of the Laws and Usages of War for deliberately maltreating, torturing, experimenting on and killing prisoners of war. 38 were sentenced to death on December 13, 1945. After the review process, 28 death sentences remained which were to be executed at War Criminal Prison #1, Landsberg/Lech.

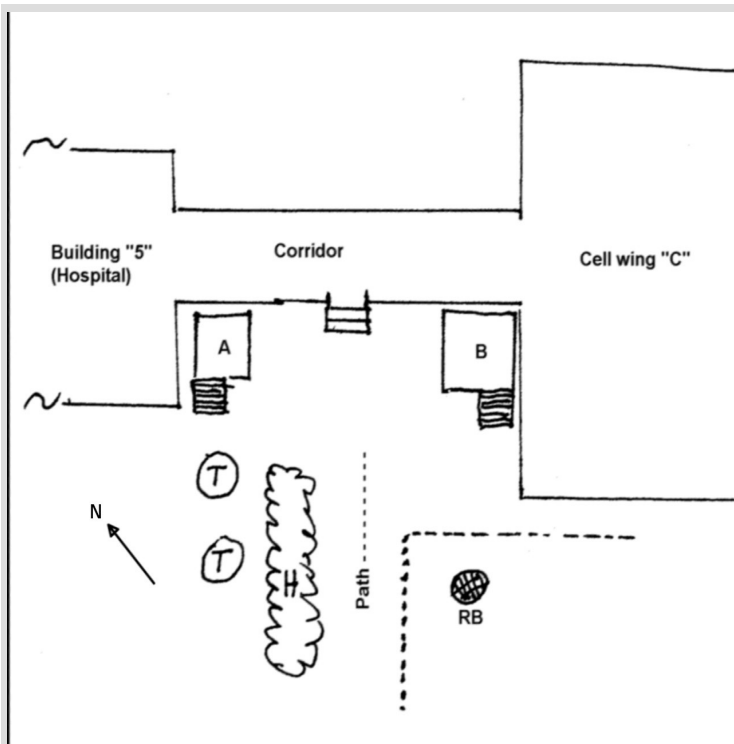
Since the trial had been convened by the Provost Marshal Section Third Army, it was their task to execute the sentences. Now at that time the Assistant Provost Marshal Third Army at Heidelberg was on temporary duty in the USA, his locum tenens did not very much like the task and argued that, since Munich was much closer to Landsberg than Heidelberg, Lt. Colonel Fogarty, in charge of the Provost Marshal Section rear in Munich, should take over. Fogarty in turn passed the buck, in typical army fashion, to the most junior and most recently arrived officer in his department: 2nd Lieutenant Stanley Tilles, 28 years old, married, father of a little son, a printer in civilian life, and a Jew.

Fogarty told Tilles that the hangman of the Third Army, M/Sgt John C. Woods, was already at Landsberg, supervising the construction of a second gallows. In order to get the business done in as short a time as possible, the Army planned to perform the executions in two days, with seven men to be hung each morning and afternoon. For this plan to work, a second gallows and a second hangman was needed.

Colonel Fogarty knew the name of the German executioner who had been used by Colonel Beall on previous occasions, and told Tilles to find him.

By a lucky coincidence, a German secretary in Fogarty's office knew the hangman. She agreed to help Tilles find him but pointed out that she did not know where he now lived. After driving around in Munich and her surroundings for a whole day, asking at places where he had previously lived, they finally found him. Tilles remembers him – of course this was Johann Reichhart – as "an older man with a sad face and a soft voice" who offered him a chair and a thin slice of black bread while they discussed the necessary arrangements.

Tilles travelled to Landsberg and met Woods who was just stretching his ropes with a duffel bag filled with sand. He showed Tilles around.



Landsberg prison was built in the shape of a cross and surrounded by a wall. The courtyard where the two gallows stood was enclosed by two wings of the prison with a corridor between them, and the outer wall. The court was large, and offered space for several shade trees and a greenhouse.

The location of the Landsberg gallows. Legend: A: Gallows used by J.C.Woods. B: Gallows used by J.B.Reichhart. T: Tree. H: Hedge. RB: Round bump on the grass area. Arrow points north.



Execution at Landsberg

There was one entrance in the centre of the corridor, and the gallows were erected to the right and left of it, directly adjacent to the walls of the prison blocks. The condemned would come out of the corridor entrance and be led to the gallows. At the foot of the gallows stairs, their hands would be pinioned, they would be led up the steps, turned round to face the court and positioned on the trap doors. Their legs would be strapped, and after completing the formalities like reading of charge and sentence, last words, and prayer, the hood and noose would be adjusted and the prisoner dropped into the space below, concealed from view by a black curtain. While he was dying, the next one would be led out to the other gallows. When the doctors had pronounced a prisoner dead, he would be cut off and laid in his coffin, lid nailed down and coffin removed for burial. There was a door in the prison wall leading to the cemetery.

As his orders demanded, Tilles made the tour of the death cells and in each read the execution order in English, followed by a translation read by his interpreter.

The next day, Tilles says, "the German hangman and his assistants arrived, and he and Woods spent several hours testing the gallows".



Landsberg Prison (present day Google Earth image). The perimeter wall is the straight line visible to the left; the hospital is the building surrounded by trees, and Wing "C" is the next in line.

Anhang 13

Chronologische Auflistung der Exekutionszeitpunkte

(Seite 999 auf der vierten Microfilmrolle zu den OMGUS
Kriegsverbrecherprozessen)

C O N F I D E N T I A L

C E R T I F I C A T E S

I certify that on 28 and 29 May 1946 the following condemned men were pronounced dead by United States Medical Officer at the exact time shown below:

28 May 1946:

1 Friedrich Wilhelm Ruppert	0954 hrs.
2 Simon Kiser	1013 "
3 Otto Forachner	1022 "
4 Franz Xaver Trankle	1044 "
5 Rudolf Heinrich Euttrop	1054 "
6 Josef Jarolin	1111 "
7 Engelbert Valentin Niedermeyer	1121 "
8 Vinzenz Schoettle	1327 "
9 Dr. Klaus Karl Schilling	1337 "
10 Josef Seuss	1354 "
11 Walter Adolf Langleist	1407 "
12 Anton Endres	1423 "
13 Otto Moll	1436 "
14 Johann Viktor Kirsch	1447 "

29 May 1946:

15 Fritz M.K. Becher	1026 "
16 Arno Lippman	1031 "
17 Wilhelm Temple	1052 "
18 Wilhelm Welter	1106 "
19 Michael Redwitz	1116 "
20 Wilhelm Wagner	1135 "
21 Martin Gottfried Weiss	1146 "
22 Johann Kick	1319 "
23 Alfred Kramer	1327 "
24 Dr. Fritz Hintermeyer	1348 "
25 Christof Ludwig Knoll	1401 "
26 Johann Baptist Eichelsdorfer	1414 "
27 Franz Boettger	1425 "
28 Leonhard Anselm Eichberger	1436 "

Stanley Tilles
STANLEY TILLES
2nd LT. INFANTRY
PW-1 C. I. SUB-SECTION

The 14 men hanged on Tuesday 28 May, 1946, in chronological order were:

Friedrich Wilhelm Ruppert, SS-Obersturmführer (1LT), who was in charge of executions at Dachau, including those of 90 Russian officers in September 1944. He also beat prisoners with a riding crop. Ruppert was implicated in the executions of four female SOE (Special Operations Executive) agents on 13 September 1944. They were Noor-un-Nisa Inayat Khan, Yolande Beekman, Eliane Plewman and Madeleine Damerment all of whom were shot at the crematorium at Dachau. Ruppert was the first to hang, being certified dead at 0954 hrs.

Simon Kiern, a block leader, was convicted of murdering a prisoner and participating in two mass executions in 1942 in which 50 Russian prisoners were shot. Kiern was certified dead at 1013 hrs.

Otto Förschner, SS-Sturmbannführer (MAJ), was in charge of nine sub-camps around Landsberg, housing some 10,000 inmates whom he maltreated. Förschner was certified dead at 1022 hrs.

Franz Xaver Trenkle. As SS-Hauptscharführer (M/Sgt) he took people to their executions at the crematorium and read the execution order to them. He denied involvement in the actual killings. He was certified dead at 1044 hrs.

Rudolf Heinrich Suttrop, SS-Obersturmführer (1LT), was the adjutant to three of the camp's commandants and as such processed execution orders. Suttrop was certified dead at 1054 hrs.

Josef Jarolin, SS-Obersturmführer (1LT), was convicted of ordering hangings, beating prisoners, including clergymen and personally shooting three Russian prisoners. During an Allied air raid on Munich he forbade prisoners to enter a bunker, resulting in a number of deaths. Jarolin was certified dead at 1111 hrs.

Engelbert Valentin Niedermeyer, SS-Unterscharführer (Sgt), was the administrator of the cemetery at Dachau where hangings took place. He was also convicted of having flogged around a hundred prisoners. He was certified dead at 1121 hrs.

Vincenz Schöttl, SS-Hauptsturmführer (CPT), was in charge of work details in "Kaufering 3" sub-camp where he regularly beat prisoners and shot at least one to death. He was certified dead at 1327 hrs.

Dr. Karl Klaus Schilling was a doctor who operated a malaria research station in the camp. He was responsible for experimenting on some 1,200 prisoners with malaria drugs, having first infected them with the disease. 30 prisoners died from malaria and some 400 more died from complications and the drug treatments. Schilling was certified dead at 1337 hrs.

Josef Seuss, SS-Hauptscharführer (M/Sgt), had participated in the murder of 35 Russian prisoners in August 1942 and participated in the murders of a further 90 Russian officers in 1944. Seuss was certified dead at 1354 hrs.

Walter Adolf Langleist, SS-Hauptsturmführer (CPT), was in charge of the guard battalion at Dachau. He murdered two Polish prisoners by beating them and throwing one into a gravel pit where he died. Certified dead at 1407 hrs.

Anton Endres, SS-Oberscharführer (T/Sgt), worked in the camp hospital where he allowed his subordinate, Kapo Heiden, to beat and murder prisoners. Endres was certified dead at 1423 hrs.

Otto Möll, SS-Oberscharführer (T/Sgt), was in charge of a work detail at "Kaufering 1" sub-camp which took men to work at the Moll Company. He beat a Russian prisoner to death and at the end of 1945 shot to death 26 prisoners who were being evacuated from "Kaufering 2" subcamp. Möll was certified dead at 1436 hrs.

Johann Viktor Kirsch, SS-Oberscharführer (T/Sgt), was convicted of maltreating prisoners while commandant of "Kaufering 1" sub-camp between November 1944 and April 1945. Kirsch was certified dead at 1447 hrs.

A further 14 men were hanged the following day, Wednesday 29 May, 1946:

Fritz Becher was a Kapo and “block eldest” who beat fellow inmates and took part in beating eight priests who subsequently died from their injuries. Becher was certified dead at 1026 hrs.

Arno Lippmann, SS-Hauptsturmführer (CPT) and commandant at “Kaufering 7” sub-camp. He beat a Polish boy who was trying to help his father and the boy later died. He also fired on a group of prisoners when the camp was being evacuated. Lippmann was certified dead at 1031 hrs.

Wilhelm Tempel was an SS-Unterscharführer (Sgt) at “Kaufering 4” sub-camp where he murdered at least two inmates. Tempel was certified dead at 1052 hrs.

Wilhelm Welter, SS-Oberscharführer (T/Sgt), was in charge of work details and often beat inmates. He also selected 12 prisoners for cold water experiments in 1942. He was certified dead at 1106 hrs.

Michael Redwitz, SS-Hauptsturmführer (CPT). Redwitz organised public floggings of prisoners on the parade ground. He was present at 40 hangings of Russian, Polish and French prisoners. Redwitz was certified dead at 1116 hrs.

Wilhelm Wagner, SS-Hauptscharführer (CPT), was in charge of the laundry from 1941 to 1943. Here he frequently beat prisoners and deprived them of food. One prisoner whom he had assaulted later died from his injuries. Wagner also participated in two hangings. He was certified dead at 1135 hrs.

Martin Gottfried Weiß (Weiss). As SS-Obersturmbannführer (Lt.-Col.) and camp commandant, Weiß was held responsible for the war crimes committed at Dachau. He was certified dead at 1146 hrs.

Johann Kick, SS-Hauptsturmführer (CPT), was a camp administrator, who processed the orders for 300 executions. He also beat prisoners and made selections for gassing. He was certified dead at 1319 hrs.

Alfred Kramer, SS-Hauptsturmführer (CPT) and commandant of “Kaufering 1” sub-camp between August and November 1944. He was responsible for several deaths there. He was certified dead at 1327 hrs.

Dr. Fritz Hintermeyer, SS-Sturmbannführer (MAJ), was the chief doctor in the camp. He murdered prisoners by lethal injection of phenol and did very little to help stop the typhus epidemic sweeping the camp. He was present at 10 executions between November 1944 and April 1945, to certify death. He in turn was certified dead by a U.S. doctor at 1348 hrs.

Christof Ludwig Knoll was a Kapo in charge of the gravel pit detail. At a Christmas celebration in 1942 he boasted that he had killed 97 Jews and was hoping to make it 100. Knoll was certified dead at 1401 hrs.

Johann Baptist Eichelsdorfer, as SS-Hauptscharführer (M/Sgt) had been commandant of “Kaufering 4” sub-camp at the beginning of 1945. He was convicted of beating prisoners there and of causing at least one death. Even though “Kaufering 4” was a sick camp, Eichelsdorfer still sent inmates out on work details. He was certified dead at 1414 hrs.

Franz Böttger, SS-Hauptscharführer (M/Sgt), was a labour service leader who organized work details. He also gave orders for executions, and took people to the crematorium to be hanged or injected. He was certified dead at 1425 hrs.

Leonhard Anselm Eichberger, SS-Hauptscharführer (M/Sgt), was present at the execution of 90 Russian officers in 1944 and participated in the shootings of 15 others, including a French general. Eichberger was certified dead at 1436 hrs.

Ten men had their death sentences reduced on review to prison with hard labour:

Dr. Wilhelm Witteler: commuted to 20 years imprisonment.

Otto Schulz: commuted to 20 years imprisonment.

Dr. Hans Eisele: commuted to 20 years imprisonment. (Later escaped)

Peter Betz: commuted to 15 years imprisonment.

Emil Erwin Mahl (Kapo): commuted to 10 years imprisonment.

Hans Bayer: commuted to 15 years imprisonment.

Dr. Fridolin-Karl Puhl: commuted to 10 years imprisonment.

Fritz Degelow: commuted to 10 years imprisonment.

Friedrich Wetzel: commuted to 10 years imprisonment.

Sylvester Filleböck: commuted to 10 years imprisonment.

A further three were sentenced to prison with hard labour in the first instance:

Johann Schöpp was given 10 years imprisonment, reduced to five years on review 24 January, 1946. Hugo Lausterer and Albin Gretsche both got 10 years imprisonment.

From 26 February to 6 March, 1947, the trials of five men took place at Dachau, as case no. 000-50-2-62. The accused were Willi Fischer, Unteroffizier (Sgt) Martin Philipp Schreyer, Josef Jorewitz, Albert Lippmann and Walter Jentner. All faced two charges of Violation of the Laws and Usages of War for acts committed at Dachau, Kaufering and Landsberg. Fischer and Schreyer were sentenced to death and both were hanged at Landsberg on 19 September, 1947. 33 year old Fischer was a Kapo at Dachau and 44 year old Schreyer an SS guard there. Jorewitz and Jentner were both convicted, the former getting a life sentence and the latter a two year sentence. Lippmann was acquitted on both counts.

Witnesses testified that Fischer had beaten prisoners so severely that at least seven had died from their injuries. Schreyer had committed similar murders of inmates.

34 year old SS-Hauptscharführer (M/Sgt) Josef Neuner was tried on 27 and 28 March, 1947. He was convicted of hanging two Russian prisoners who had tried to escape. He was also found guilty of shooting prisoners during a forced evacuation march in April 1945. Neuner went to the gallows on 26 September, 1947.

40 year old SS-Unterscharführer (Sgt) Hermann Zisch was tried between 3 January and 3 February, 1947. He was convicted of maltreating prisoners and the shooting death of a Czechoslovakian one who tried to get a drink of water while on a forced march from Kaufering 11 to Buchberg in April 1945. Zisch was hanged on 26 September, 1947.

Josef Deiner was the only defendant at a trial held on 4-6 March 1947. The 62 year SS-Obersturmführer (1LT) was in charge of the carpenter's shop and wood yard at Dachau and was convicted of beating to death a Polish youth and two other Polish men. Deiner was hanged on 14 November, 1947.

Three defendants were tried on 26 November to 3 December, 1946. They were Franz Frohnäpfel, Alois Hipp and Ernst Angerer. Frohnäpfel was an SS-Oberscharführer (T/Sgt) and Hipp and Angerer were both SS-Hauptscharführer (M/Sgt) and SS Roll Call leaders and had taken part in the murders of Russian prisoners. The former two were hanged on 14 November 1947. Angerer drew a 25 year prison sentence.

Nikolaus Kahles was tried at Dachau from 16 to 18 June 1947. He was a 32 year old private in the Waffen-SS. He was convicted of shooting a man with his rifle when he was late getting back onto a prisoner transport train. He too was hanged on 14 November, 1947.

Also hanged on 14 November 1947 was 56 year old August Richard Ruhnke who had been an SS-Hauptscharführer (M/Sgt) and deputy leader at the Kaufbeuren-Riederloh sub-camp. He was convicted of beating prisoners to death, making them stand for hours in the snow and of starving them.

Alex Bernhard Piorkowski was an SS-Sturmbannführer (MAJ) and commandant at Dachau. He was tried on 17 January, 1947, accused of murdering or ordering the murders of prisoners, including several Russian TB patients who were killed by lethal injection and other Russians who were shot. He was also convicted of taking part in experiments involving immersion in cold water and subjection to air pressure changes. Piorkowski was hanged on 22 October, 1948.

Josef Remmele was tried at Dachau on 9 to 15 September 1947 on four charges, including participating in

the killing of approximately 40 Russian prisoners in October 1941. 44 year old Remmele was an SS-Hauptscharführer (M/Sgt) and was hanged on 3 December, 1948.

52 year old Georg Schallermair was tried on 18 to 23 September, 1947. He too had been an SS-Hauptscharführer (M/Sgt) and roll call leader from August 1944 to 1 May, 1945. He was accused of beating inmates to death and was hanged on the 7th of June, 1951, in the last batch of executions carried out at Landsberg.

Neuengamme concentration camp

Neuengamme concentration camp (Konzentrationslager in German) may not be as well known to some readers as some of the other concentration camps, such as Auschwitz, Belsen, Dachau and Ravensbrück, but more members of its staff were hanged than those of any of the other camps that came under British jurisdiction.

In all 32 men would be hanged at Hameln for war crimes committed at Neuengamme and its 80 satellite camps.

In September 1938 the SS owned company DEST (= "German Earth & Stone Works") took over the defunct brickyard (Klinkerwerk in German) on the banks of the Dove-Elbe river at Neuengamme in the Bergedorf borough of Hamburg.

Neuengamme was opened by the SS on 13 December, 1938 as a satellite camp of Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Its original purpose was to resume brick production using forced labour, for the many building projects being undertaken around Hamburg.

By June 1940 Neuengamme had become an independent concentration camp housing around 1,000 inmates. This number grew rapidly to 3,000 by the end of that year.

Initially the camp was used to house German "undesirables". Later it was used for prisoners from Eastern Europe and in total some 104,000 - 106,000 people were held there over the period of its existence. The camp was evacuated and was virtually empty by the end of April 1945. It was seized by the British Army in early May of that year.

The death register at Neuengamme records that some 40,000 prisoners died in the camp up to April 10, 1945. At least 10,000 more died in the camp in the following week and during the course of the forced evacuation of the remaining inmates. In all, more than 50,000 prisoners, almost half of all the camp's inmates died during its six year existence. Many succumbed to disease, malnutrition and over work. Some were gassed, including some 200 Russian prisoners in 1942.

During 1942, Messap, a firm making time fuses for grenades, Jastram who produced ship's engines and torpedo parts, and Walther-Werke the well known small arms firm all set up factories adjacent to the camp to use forced labour.

In April of 1942 a crematorium was constructed.

In 1943 female sub-camps were set up to provide further sources of labour for the factories. The following year a special area of the camp was set up to house some 400 "prominent" French prisoners.

As the end of the war neared, the SS evacuated about 10,000 prisoners on a forced march towards Lübeck. Thousands had already been sent to Bergen-Belsen and another 6,500 prisoners had been transferred onto ships in the North Sea, two of which were sunk by British aircraft.

A total of 33 trials of staff of the main Neuengamme camp and its satellite camps were carried out by British authorities involving 99 male defendants and 19 females between March 1946 and 1948. However, only those resulting in death sentences are within the scope of this book.

The first Neuengamme trial

14 members of staff of the main camp were tried by a British war crimes court at the Curiohaus in Hamburg, from March 18, 1946, to May 3, 1946, before three military judges sitting with a Judge Advocate. They were charged with Committing a War Crime in that they at Neuengamme between June 1940 and May 1945, when members of staff at Neuengamme Concentration Camps, in violation of the laws and usages of war, were together concerned in the killing and ill-treatment of Allied Nationals, being inmates of the said concentration camp.

All pleaded not guilty. Former inmates from six European countries gave evidence of the inhumane conditions that they had been subjected to, the severe mistreatment, the killing of Soviet POWs with poisonous gas, the experiments conducted on humans, and the executions carried out in the concentration camp. The defendants were:

Maximilian Johann Pauly, SS-Obersturmbannführer (Lt.-Col.), the camp commandant from September 1942 until evacuation. He was previously camp commander of KZ Stutthof.

Anton Thumann, SS-Obersturmführer (1LT), commander of the "Protective Detention" (Schutzhaft in German) camp.

From 1933 Thumann was a member of the KZ guard at Dachau. In May 1941 he became the commandant of the "Protective Detention" camp at KZ Groß-Rosen. From February 1943 to March 1944 he served at KZ Majdanek in the same position. Because of his sadistic tendencies, his participation in selections, gassings and shootings (Operation Erntefest) he was nicknamed "Executioner of Majdanek" by the inmates.

Dr. Alfred Trzebinski, SS-Hauptsturmführer (CPT), was chief medical officer for the Neuengamme sub-camps from 1943.

In July 1941 he was the camp doctor at Auschwitz. He moved to Majdanek in autumn 1941, fulfilling the same function. He participated in the killing of 20 Jewish children at Bullenhuser Damm, injecting them with morphine before they were hanged by Arnold Strippel and Johann Frahm (see below).

Dr. Bruno Kitt, SS-Hauptsturmführer (CPT), was the camp doctor.

Wilhelm Dreimann, SS-Unterscharführer (Sgt) (The "executioner" of Neuengamme).

Adolf Speck, SS-Scharführer (S/Sgt) (Block leader at the brickworks, who had shot a prisoner who threw salt in his face.)

Johann Reese, SS-Unterscharführer (Sgt).

Wilhelm Bahr, SS-Unterscharführer (Sgt), who had testified in the trial of Bruno Tesch that he had gassed 200 Soviet POWs. (see "Zylon B" case)

Andreas Brems, SS-Unterscharführer (Sgt).

Wilhelm Warnke, SS-Rottenführer (Cpl).

Heinrich Ruge, SS-Unterscharführer (Sgt), (Block chief).

On 3 May, 1946 the above named were sentenced to death and transferred from Altona prison to Fuhlsbüttel penitentiary. Lord Russell of Liverpool, highest-ranking Judge Advocate of the British Army of the Rhine (B.A.O.R.), confirmed the sentences on 26 August, 1946. On 2 October, 1946 the condemned were transported to Hameln. All eleven plus Ludwig Knorr, a kapo condemned in a different trial, were hanged at Hameln on 8 October, 1946.

A further three defendants were given prison sentences, viz:

Karl Totzauer, SS-Obersturmführer (1LT) (Pauly's adjutant): 20 years in prison.

Karl Wiedemann, SS-Obersturmführer (1LT) (Guard commander): 15 years in prison.

Walter Kümmel, SS-Unterscharführer (Sgt) (Block leader): 10 years in prison.

Kümmel was released from Allied National Prison, Werl, on 26 February, 1952, and Totzauer and Wiedemann on 5 August, 1954. Kümmel was again investigated in 1970, and accused of murder in three cases in 1982. He was acquitted in two cases. The third case was, according to the court, not murder but only “aiding and abetting”. Because of the statute of limitation, Kümmel could not be tried for this either.

SS physician Dr. Kurt Heißmeyer conducted tuberculosis experiments on prisoners at Neuengamme. He had ten girls and ten boys, aged between 5 and 12 years old brought to him from Auschwitz concentration camp in November 1944. The children were accompanied and cared for by two French doctors who were prisoners and two Dutch male nurses, who had been imprisoned as resistance fighters. Afterwards, to erase all traces of this experiment, the SS decided to murder the children and their four caretakers. Just days before the end of the war, they were brought to the Bullenhuser Damm School satellite camp, in the district of Rothenburgsort. Here, on the night of 20 April, 1945 they were hanged from hooks set into the wall of the basement. The same night, 24 unnamed Soviet prisoners were also hanged there. Dr. Trzebinski injected the children with morphine to render them unconscious, before they were hanged by Johann Frahm. Arnold Strippel, Ewald Jauch and Wilhelm Brake were also involved in these murders. Both Frahm and Jauch were hanged on 11 October 1946 for their parts in the crime, Brake was sentenced to five years in prison.

Heißmeyer escaped trial by the British and continued in medical practice. He was eventually tried by a German court in 1966 and sentenced to life in prison, where he died 14 months later on August 29, 1967.

Arnold Strippel initially managed to go into hiding and escaped trial. In mid-December 1948, a former Buchenwald inmate recognized him in Frankfurt/Main city. A German court at Frankfurt sentenced him to multiple “life” terms in June 1949. His sentence was later reviewed and considerably reduced. He was released on 21 April, 1969. Since he had served more time than the revised sentence prescribed, he was given compensation of 121,500 German Marks which would have equated to about \$3.3 million (USD) in 2017.

During the evacuation, 58 male and 13 female resistance fighters from the nearby Fuhlsbüttel satellite concentration camp were selected to be brought to Neuengamme to be executed on the orders of the Higher SS and Police Leader Georg-Henning Graf von Bassewitz-Behr. The Camp Protective Detention Leader, Anton Thumann, participated in the execution of these prisoners who were hanged between 21 and 23 April 1945 in a detention cell. When some of the men tried to resist, Thumann threw a hand grenade into the cell.

Graf von Bassewitz-Behr was tried by a British Military Court in August 1947 and acquitted of charges of having murdered five Russian women and taking part in the executions of 71 prisoners at Neuengamme. Afterwards he was handed over to the Soviets who sentenced him to 25 years in prison with hard labour for the murder of 45,000 civilians in the Dnipropetrovsk region. He died in a work camp in East Siberia two years later.

In eight subsequent trials, a further 23 defendants had to answer for their crimes in the main camp at Neuengamme. They resulted in thirteen death sentences, of which nine were confirmed and carried out.

Neuengamme trials 2 & 3

13 men stood trial Hamburg and three defendants were sentenced to death. They were:

Johann Frahm and Ewald Jauch (both hanged on 11 October, 1946). See Bullenhuser Damm School murders above.

Emil Hoffmann (death - hanged 23 January 1947).

Details of the verdicts and sentences of the other 10 defendants are not known.

Neuengamme trial 4

This trial resulted in two death sentences, against Josef Klinger who was hanged on 26 June, 1947 (see below) and Wilhelm Schneider who was hanged on 23 January 1947.

Neuengamme trial 6

SS-Oberscharführer (T/Sgt) Max Markwart was the only defendant sentenced to death and he was hanged on 23 January 1947. Markwart, as Kommandoführer, had been in charge of the infamous Elbe-Command (=work detail) and of the work detail in the brickworks.

Details of Markwart's specific crimes and the verdicts and sentences of four other defendants are not known.

Neuengamme trial 8

This trial was held at the Curiohaus in Hamburg with the sentences being announced on 7 March, 1947. Two death sentences were passed.

SS-Hauptsturmführer (CPT) Albert Lütkemeyer admitted to having shot dead five Soviet POW officers. He was hanged on 26 June, 1947, together with Wilhelm Keus.

Neuengamme trial 9

SS-Unterscharführer (Sgt) Udo Kettenbeil had been Kommandoführer of the Penal Company in the autumn of 1943. This has been described by inmates as "a KZ within the KZ". Kettenbeil was tried at Hamburg on 22 and 23 October, 1947 and hanged at Hameln on 29 January, 1948.

The trials of the staff of the satellite camps resulted in 14 death sentences of which eleven were carried out.

Hannover-Ahlem satellite camp trial

The trial started at Hamburg on 16 April, 1947. The defendants were charged with being concerned in the ill-treatment of Allied National internees of the Concentration Camp at Hannover Ahlem, between November 1944 and April 1945.

The sentences were as follows:

SS-Rottenführer (Cpl) Wilhelm Dammann: death – hanged 15 September, 1947.

SS guard Stefan Streit: death – hanged 15 September, 1947.

Otto Harder: 15 years, later reduced to 10 years, released in 1951.

SS-Oberscharführer (T/Sgt) Hans Hermann Ernst Harden (leader of the guard): 1 year.

The trial of the Wilhelmshaven a.k.a. Alter Banter Weg satellite camp staff took place at Hamburg in 1947, with the following outcomes:

Gustav Alfred Jepsen, Danish SS member: death sentence - hanged 26 June, 1947.

Gottfried Drossen, navy shipyard official: 15 years.

Hans Horstmann: 15 years.

SS-Unterscharführer (Sgt) Rudolf Günther, camp commandant: 15 years.

Otto Thümmel, camp commandant: 5 years.

Ernst Hoffmann, head of camp administration: 4 years.

Hinrichs Sührig (kapo), kitchen chief: 18 months.

Wilhelmshaven trial

Three men were tried at Wilhelmshaven between 12-30 September & 1-8 October, 1946. They were in charge of the civilian internment camp Esterwegen. The charge against them was : in that they at Wilhelmshaven between 1941 and 1945, in violation of the laws and usages of war, were concerned in the ill-treatment and killing of Allied Nationals interned in Germany.

All were convicted and sentenced as follows:

Sebastian Schipper: death – hanged 23 January 1947.

Wilhelm Vohs: 14 years.

Josef Lucas: 1 year.

The sentences of Vohs and Schipper were confirmed by the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), BAOR on 23 December 1946, who refused to confirm the sentence of Lucas.

Schandelah trial

This took place at Braunschweig from 2 January, 1947 to 3 February, 1947. The thirteen defendants were charged with committing a war crime in that they the said Wittig, Ohlen, and Hefter when managers of Steinoel Co. Ltd. and the said Ebsen, Truschel, Jahn, Heitz, Hamm, Grosse, Schieffelbein, Schenawa, Hennings and Spinnrath, when members of the staff at Schandelah, Labour Camp, Schandelah, Germany between 1 May, 1944 and 30 April, 1945 in violation of the laws and usages of war were concerned in the ill-treatment and killing of Allied Nationals interned in the said Labour Camp and working for the said company.

Schandelah was a satellite camp of Neuengamme where the inmates had to extract oil shale for synthetic gasoline production. The SS personnel were subordinate to Hauptscharführer (M/Sgt) Max Kirstein (satellite camp Schillstraße). Kirstein was never tried.

Four men were sentenced to death, they were :

Friedrich Ebsen, SS-Unterscharführer (Sgt) and camp commandant (hanged 2 May, 1947).

Carl Truschel, deputy camp commandant who had killed a Russian inmate (hanged 2 May, 1947).

Johann Heitz, SS dog handler (hanged 2 May, 1947 for shooting three prisoners).

Arthur Große (hanged 2 May, 1947 for beating to death a French inmate).

Solms Wittig (sentenced to death; commuted to 20 years by GOC-in-C and released in May 1955).

Hans Detlev Ohlen (10 years; commuted to 7 years by GOC-in-C and released August 1950)

Herbert Schieffelbein, kapo (2 years).

Erich Arnold Jahn, head of kitchen – not guilty.

Otto Hefter – not guilty.

Paul Schenawa – not tried.

Hans Spinnrath – not tried.

Jakob Hamm – not tried.

Hennings – not tried.

The above sentences were confirmed by GOC-in-C, BAOR, on 17 March 1947.

There were 26 more trials, all connected to Neuengamme. Neuengamme had 85 secondary camps, and the crimes committed in 16 of them were investigated and the alleged perpetrators brought to trial. In August 1948, trials were discontinued (even those which were under investigation) because the time limit

for the authorization to hold trials under the Royal Warrant had run out!

Hannover-Mühlenberg

This satellite camp existed from February to 6 April, 1945. About 3,000 inmates were employed in the manufacturing of 5-inch Anti-Aircraft guns.

The commandant was SS-Oberscharführer (T/Sgt) Walter Quakernack. He was a member of the “Political Department” (Camp Gestapo) at Auschwitz. He allegedly participated there in the gassing of Soviet POWs and shot inmates himself. He led the Mühlenberg inmates in a death march to Bergen-Belsen on 6-8 April, 1945. He was sentenced to death for his crimes at Auschwitz and Belsen. Quakernack was hanged at Hameln on 11 October, 1946.

Helmstedt-Beendorf

At Beendorf there were two satellite camps of Neuengamme and one of Ravensbrück. The inmates worked in subterranean salt mines on armament production for the German Air Force.

The camp commandant, SS-Obersturmführer (1LT) Gerhard Poppenhagen was sentenced on 14 August, 1946 to 15 years imprisonment in a British Military trial at Hamburg (Curiohaus) lasting from 29 July to 13 August, 1946. He was released in 1953.

His deputy SS-Unterscharführer (Sgt) Anton Brunken received the death penalty and was hanged on 23 January, 1947. Survivors described him as the actual chief of the camp since Poppenhagen did nothing to prevent his wanton punishments and killings.

Husum-Schwesing

From 26 September, 1944 to 29 December, 1944 2,500 inmates from 14 nations were used in forced labour to dig and build anti-tank trenches, dugouts, and command posts as part of the “Friesenwall” (Frisian Wall) project. During these three months, an estimated 300 to 500 inmates died from overwork, malnourishment and ill-treatment.

The camp commandant was SS-Untersturmführer (2LT) Hans Otto Hermann Griem. His career included posts at Neuengamme, Dachau, Hannover-Stöcken, Schwesing, Ladelund and (Meppen-)Dalum. Inmates accused him of embezzlement of food and of shooting indiscriminately into a crowd of inmates when drunk (which he frequently was, they said).

Griem was arrested by the British in 1945 but succeeded in escaping on 3 August, 1946, shortly before his trial was about to start.

Ladelund

This camp was also involved with the erection of defenses as part of the “Frisian Wall” project (see Husum-Schwesing above). Hans Otto Hermann Griem was in charge of this camp as well and his deputy was SS-Unterscharführer (Sgt) Josef Klingler who enjoyed the reputation of a cruel brute. Klingler was sentenced to death by a British Military Court sitting in Hamburg in March 1947, and was hanged on 26 June, 1947 at Hameln.

Salzgitter-Drütte

Situated on the premises of the Hermann-Göring-Works. Built in 1942, the number of inmates rose to 2,700 by mid-1944 and 3,150 in September 1944. The inmates had to produce shells and cartridge cases. 682 died through illness, executions and accidents.

When on 7 April, 1945 the camp was evacuated, the inmates were transported to Celle, together with the

women from concentration camp Salzgitter-Bad.

At Celle the train, holding about 4,000 inmates, was attacked on 8 April by American bombers. Since the inmates were not allowed to leave the train, up to 1,000 of them lost their lives. About 1,300 inmates managed to escape. 1,100 of them were recaptured, and at least 170 were killed during the so-called Celle Massacre (also euphemistically called the “Celle hare hunting”) in which SS, police, army, Volkssturm, Hitler Youth and Celle residents participated.

After preliminary proceedings in December 1947, a British Military Court first at Hannover, later at Celle, sat in April and May 1948 to try “crimes against humanity” under Control Commission Order No. 10.

On 14 May, 1948, three defendants were sentenced to death. They were policeman Helmut Ahlborn, civilian and local boxing celebrity Otto Amelung, and a young soldier named Fritz Joost. Four received prison sentences between four and ten years (Alwin Schuchardt and Otto Schwandt 10 years each, Jakob Decker(t) seven and Albert Sievert four years imprisonment), six were acquitted (Heinz Luhmann, Friedrich Lautenbach, Oskar Carlowitz, Karl Schmidt, Heinrich Giesemann and Ernst Fischer). The highest British Court reviewed the cases. It quashed Joost's death sentence because there was no evidence to refute the defence of the accused that he had shot above the heads of fleeing inmates and not at them. The two other death sentences were reduced to 15 years for Ahlborn and 20 years for Amelung, respectively. All of these men were released early, the last in early October 1952. Amelung, in spite of his own confession to have shot dead four inmates, remained a highly respected citizen locally.

Mauthausen Concentration Camp

Mauthausen is a small town in Upper Austria on the north bank of the river Danube, some 20 Km. from the city of Linz.

In March 1938, following the Nazi annexation of Austria (Anschluss) a concentration camp was set up there and the first inmates arrived on 8 August, 1938. The early inmates were Austrian and German men who were political opponents of the Nazi regime, and people labelled as “criminal” or “antisocial” by the Nazis which included homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses and Gypsies. Mauthausen and its satellite camp at Gusen were close to existing granite quarries and inmates were used as forced labour in these to provide stone for building projects. By 1942 over 3,300 prisoners, who were living on totally inadequate food rations, were working in these quarries, 11 hours a day in the summer and nine hours a day in winter. The less fortunate ones were required to carry 50 Kg (110 lb) rocks up 186 steps from the floor of the quarry as punishment for minor infringements of camp rules. This led to deaths from exhaustion and from crushing when the exhausted man and the rock he was carrying fell back onto the men below.

The first commandant of Mauthausen was Albert Sauer. In February 1939 he was replaced as commandant by Franz Ziereis, a former career soldier. Ziereis remained as commandant for six years, until 3 May, 1945 when he fled with his wife. He was arrested on 23 May and tried to escape, being shot three times before he was recaptured. He died from his injuries and never stood trial.

In January 1941, SS General Reinhard Heydrich, the chief of the Reich Main Office for Security (Reichssicherheitshauptamt; RSHA), designated Mauthausen as a Category III concentration camp, to hold those prisoners whom the RSHA deemed to be “severely incriminated, especially previously convicted criminals and asocials.” This effectively meant extermination through labour.

Mauthausen remained in operation until it was taken over by the US Army on 5 May, 1945. There were just over 100 sub-camps, including the nearby three Gusen camps, which opened in May 1940, Passau I and II in Germany and many smaller ones in Austria and neighbouring countries to the east.

In early 1941 the SS began the “Aktion 14f13” or “Sonderbehandlung” (Special treatment) operation to kill weak and sick camp inmates. Starting in August 1941, these prisoners from Gusen and Mauthausen concentration camps were transported to the Hartheim Castle euthanasia facility near Linz, to be gassed or killed by lethal injection. Around 5,000 prisoners from Mauthausen and Gusen and around 3,000 from

Dachau concentration camp were gassed in Hartheim as part of this operation. Hartheim had a crematorium for disposal of the bodies.

Executions by shooting were carried out at Mauthausen and by March 1942, a gas chamber was in operation there. Initially this was used for Russian POWs but also later for inmates who were too sick for work. It is thought that some 3,500 people were killed in this gas chamber between March 1942 and April 1945. Crematoria were installed at Mauthausen and Gusen as well as at Melk and Ebensee sub-camps.

Use of Mauthausen to provide forced labour to industry only began in 1942. Steyr-Daimler-Puch AG, the largest arms company in Austria began to take prisoners from Mauthausen and later set up a sub-camp near their works to manufacture arms.

In 1944 a women's section was added to the camp to provide further forced labour. It had a capacity of around 3,000 women and it is estimated that in total about 10,000 women were held here at different times.

As the Russian army advanced from the east, through Poland, concentration camps were evacuated, with some 25,000 prisoners from Auschwitz-Birkenau, Groß Rosen, Sachsenhausen, Ravensbrück and Mittelbau-Dora arriving at Mauthausen between January and May 1945. More came from the Venusberg and Freiberg sub-camps of Flossenbürg concentration camp, but there is no remaining record of their numbers.

Estimates of the number of prisoners who died at Mauthausen and in its satellites vary greatly, from 122,000 to 320,000. The Mauthausen Memorial website gives a rather more conservative figure of 90,000, out of a total of around 190,000 people imprisoned in the main camp and its sub-camps over seven years. Surviving records show that over 11,000 deaths occurred in April 1945 alone. The true total figure will never be known as many death records were destroyed during April 1945, prior to the camps being abandoned, to remove incriminating evidence.

On 3 May, 1945 the staff of Mauthausen and the Gusen camps fled, leaving some 40,000 prisoners to their fate. When US soldiers entered the camps two days later they found many prisoners were in very poor health due to malnutrition and disease. Some 3,000 died from these causes over the next few weeks.

War crimes investigators started work immediately and were aided by records that prisoners had kept or had rescued from destruction. Suspected war criminals began to be rounded up and sent to Dachau to await trial.

The first trial of 61 staff members of Mauthausen took place at Dachau between 29 March, 1946 and 13 May, 1946. This was US vs. Hans Altfuldisch et al., case 000-50-5.

Once again a generic charge was brought against the defendants. It specified that between 1 January, 1942 and 5 May, 1945, the defendants "acting in pursuance of a common design" did subject prisoners to "killings, tortures, beatings, starvation, abuses and indignities". Specific incidents of these were recorded in the trial report. All of the defendants were found guilty and 58 men were sentenced to death, the other three defendants being sentenced to life in prison.

49 men were subsequently hanged at Landsberg. 23 were executed on 27th May, 1947, in two hours and 37 minutes, using two gallows. 25 shared their fate the following day, the executions taking three hours and 30 minutes, also using the same two gallows. Otto Striegel was to be hanged with the rest of these men but received a last minute stay of execution. He was hanged on 20 June, 1947.

The court found that everyone involved was culpable and criminally responsible for what had happened at Mauthausen and its satellite camps. It further found that it was not possible for anyone working in these camps not to know that war crimes were being committed.

There were 61 further trials of members of staff at Mauthausen, most of which took place in 1947. According to www.Mauthausen-memorial.org, 306 persons were tried of whom 37 were subsequently hanged. Some of the others who were convicted were given long prison sentences, but they were released in the early 1950s. A selection of some of the more interesting cases follows.

Case number 000-50-5-3 was the trial of Erik Schuettauf et al., that took place at Dachau between 13 and

24 June, 1947. Six defendants faced the court on a single charge of "Violation of the Laws and Usages of War". All were former members of the Waffen SS at Gusen. All were convicted, with Schuettauf and Alfons Heisig being sentenced to life in prison. Wilhelm Grill, Willi Jungjohann, Oskar Tandler and Herbert Hartung were condemned to death. Of these, only Tandler's sentence was confirmed and he was hanged on 26 November, 1948. 57 year old Tandler had been drafted into the SS in 1940. He was sent to Gusen and acted as an interpreter, as he spoke both Polish and Russian languages. He later became block leader, responsible for Russian juveniles.

In March or April of 1942, Tandler participated in the gassing of 156 Russian prisoners. He also participated in the executions of other Russian inmates. At trial further testimony was given of Tandler's maltreatment of his prisoners.

An unusual case was US vs. Lauriano Navas et al., case number 000-50-25, heard 14 to 21 July, 1947. It is the only trial in which there was no German defendant but four subjects of a neutral country, Spain. These four had been fighting in the Spanish civil war on the republican side, had fled to France and were captured by the Germans when France was overrun. To the Nazis Spanish Republicans equalled Communists so they were held as political prisoners at Mauthausen where they became Kapos. 37 year old Indalecio Gonzalez was hanged on 2 February, 1949, the other three being given prison sentences. Gonzalez had been a chief Kapo at Gusen, who in late 1944 and early 1945 had beaten a French and several Polish prisoners to death. Witnesses also testified to his frequent acts of physical violence towards inmates.

Ten men were arraigned at Dachau between 7-21 August, 1947, in case No. 000-50-5-23. Two did not stand trial, four were sentenced to "Death by hanging", one was acquitted and the others given prison terms. The four condemned were subsequently hanged at Landsberg on 19 November 1948, together with three other men convicted of similar offences in separate trials.

All were accused of "Violating the Laws and Usages of War" at Mauthausen and its sub-camps, between 1 January, 1942 and 5 May, 1945.

Austrian born 32 year old Franz Kofler was executed for the murder of 17 Jewish inmates at Mauthausen in August 1942. With pistol in one hand and a whip in the other, he forced these men to jump out of their block through an open window into the yard where he chased them into an electrified fence. 16 were killed by this and the 17th man was shot to death on Kofler's orders when the fence malfunctioned. He killed a further three inmates by electrocution in December 1942.

Michael Heller was a 37 year old Rumanian national and Waffen SS corporal, who was an assistant Block Leader at Mauthausen from 8 August 1943 to 24 February 1945. He was convicted of the murders of Allied paratrooper inmates in August 1944. He had also participated in other executions.

24 year old Gustav Petrat was a dog leader at Mauthausen from May 1944 until he fled in the following May. He was accused of torturing a Polish teenage girl who he had caught stealing a carrot. He was also charged with beating other Polish girls to death.

Quirin Flaucher was 32 year old German national and male nurse at Mauthausen who was convicted of beating a number of inmate patients to death.

The last hangings for crimes committed at Mauthausen took place 2 February 1949.

They were of :

Karl Schrögler, a 42 year old German national who as a block elder in Gusen 1 had boasted that he had killed 1,500 inmates. He was convicted of drowning two Yugoslavian and one Polish inmate, between March and September 1943. He gave the men a bath in a tank of water into which had put "chlor" (chlorine). After a few minutes he pulled his victims out and dropped them on the concrete floor. As block elder of Block 32 he drowned large numbers of inmates in a communal bath large enough to hold 400 people and in which the water was 50 cm deep. It is thought that approximately 6,000 inmates were killed in this way. He also regularly beat inmates with a rubber hose filled with sand.

37 year old Dr. Helmuth Vetter was the camp physician at Gusen, who had administered lethal injections of

gasoline or peroxide to inmates. He selected prisoners who were then moved to Block 31 “the last stop to Heaven” where the injections took place. In a two month period in the spring of 1943 about 1,000 inmates were murdered in this way.