

Nord Pas de Calais Holocaust Trail Education Pack (2014)

Foreword

In World War II a group of 2252 Jewish men living in Belgium were separated from their families and deported to work as slave labour on Hitler's Atlantic Wall in the vicinity of Boulogne and Calais, in July / August 1942. They were sent to some 15 permanent and temporary forced labour camps, mostly along the coast. They worked on the Atlantic Wall making bunkers and defences, as well as repairing bomb damage, for 3 months, until October 1942, when most were transported, via Mechelen, in Belgium, direct to Auschwitz concentration camp, where 96% were killed, at, or soon after, their arrival. Their families with the protection of fathers and sons already removed deliberately removed by the Gestapo, were easy victims and were also sent to be exterminated at Auschwitz.

This education pack focuses on the experiences of David Shentow, one of the only survivors of the Belgian Jewish slave labourers, and his story of forced labour in constructing a 4km concrete road the 'Chemin des Juifs' (the 'Jews Road') and his experiences at one of the main Jewish concentration camps, Lager Tibor, at Dannes. The study visit goes to the Jew's Road, which still survives in its entirety in a local nature reserve, and sees the foot-prints of both the Jews and Germans still preserved in the concrete and also goes to the site and memorial of the camp at Dannes, as well as Jewish slave labourer graves. The study visit also takes in defensive fortress bunkers constructed by Jews, and the Kriegsmarine, also constructed by Jews and other slave workers a massive naval munitions store buried under chalk, the scene of a visit by Field Marshal Erwin Rommel.

This education pack and visits provides a way of understanding less well known aspects of the Holocaust that happened literally in sight of England and alerts us to how the Holocaust affected the entirety of Europe (as well as North Africa) and links into a wider context of Nazi slavery and exploitation of people. The visit to the camp sites in NW France is distinctive and less traumatic than a visit to one of the extermination camps in Poland, as it is one step removed from the experience of mass-extinction, though it was the ante-chamber to Auschwitz awaiting at the end of the railway line...

Access

This group of Holocaust sites in the Nord Pas de Calais is just south of Boulogne and about an easy 40 minute drive from the Channel Tunnel, as well as the other Channel Terminals at Calais.

The pack has been created in conjunction with the Hardelet Study Centre who can provide accommodation and study visits for schools and education groups, for which the use of this study pack can be included, or used as a stand-alone element. Some or all of this education pack could be completed in a week-end study visit and comprises 2 main study walks, which can be followed up in the class-room, during the visit, or on return home.

Disabled Access

The Chemin des Juifs is wheel-chair accessible on the concrete roadway. The study walk is a round 3 – 4 miles with some steep gradients towards the end of the road. The site of the memorial and Jewish graves at Dannes is easily accessible, direct from a car park. The site of the camp at Dannes can be viewed from the path that runs along-side the road and access may also be feasible along the Chemin du Facteur. However, the Kreigsmarine is 1km along an un-metalled road and the longer tour route would not be suitable for those with mobility problems, though the visit to the Bunker at Dunnette would be feasible, as it can be accessed directly off a largely tarmacked road and vehicular access is possible.

Visit One

The Jew's Road (Chemin des Juifs)

Visit Two

The Site of Lager Tibor at Dannes

Starter Activities

- 1) As a class or group discussion and define: 'What is a genocide?'
- 2) What historical and more recent genocides are you aware of?
- 3) To start your learning, on your own, write down as many names of World War II concentration camps (and ghettos) that you have heard about – who has got the most names and in which country(s) are most of these locations?
- 4) In the following space make a spider diagram or mind-map showing some of the key facts the Holocaust that you have *previously learnt* about the Holocaust. (This activity could start as a class discussion / brainstorm on the white-board and you can add points made by the rest of your class and teachers)

Now read the following Fact File 1 and complete the activities:

Fact File 1 – The Holocaust and Slave Labour

Most people when they think of the Holocaust they understand that Jews were deported from their homes across Europe, either direct to the concentration camps in the east for immediate extermination, or to a ghetto in Eastern Europe for a period of forced labour and starvation, before final deportation to a concentration camp and the bullet, or gas chamber. The Nazis intended that all Jews (and Roma) were to be exterminated as a racial genocide.

However, the most recent research by the Holocaust Memorial Museum and others, brings to the foreground the fact that many Jews were *also* deported and used as *slave labourers* in a network of 2,400 forced labour camps for Jews in locations as far apart as Norway, the Sahara and the Channel Islands and that they might be detained in a number of slave-labour camps before final deportation to final concentration camps like Auschwitz, or extermination camps such as Treblinka.

As one example, while Simon Wiesenthal's is the best known as a survivor of Auschwitz, he related that he had been to some 11 camps in total before Auschwitz.

As slave labourers, Jews were sometimes working in camps that were only for Jews, or in other cases they were often detained (but generally segregated), alongside other detainees, Prisoners of War and slave labourers of multi-national origins, from across Europe, Africa and Indo-China, and whose conditions, while variable, could sometimes, at worst be little different from that the Jews. Russian Prisoners of War were treated particularly badly.

There were incredibly around 43,000 camps and ghettos of all types and for all prisoners (not just Jews), across the Nazi empire, including c. 30,000 forced labour camps (including forced labour camps under Organisation Todt) for civilian workers in Germany and occupied countries.

The Nazis used these slave labour camps to *oppress* the countries they had conquered and to provide much needed *labour* for the Nazi war-effort. They also used camps to *punish* people who did not conform to what the Nazis wanted (for example by not working for them or by breaking their rules) and to *eliminate* anyone who was regarded as an enemy of the German state (you could even be sent to a camp for telling a joke about Hitler). They also used the labour camps as a way of *killing* people who were regarded as racially inferior or otherwise un-desirable by the Nazis, through what the Germans call the 'Doctrine of Annihilation through Labour'. Many inmates of the camps would gradually die over weeks and months, through neglect, hunger, beatings, lack of medical care and over-work, even if the labour camps did not have gas chambers or mass-executions.

The experience of slave and involuntary labour was one of the defining aspects of Nazi occupation, affecting many millions of Jews, Christians and Muslims from across Europe, but one that is still little talked about.

Consolidation Activities:

- 1) How many Jewish slave labour camps were there?
- 2) How many forced camps and ghettos were there for Jews and non-Jews in total?
- 3) Where were these camps located?
- 4) What did the Nazis use these camps for?
- 5) What do you understand by the 'Doctrine of Annihilation' through labour?

Class / Group Discussion

- A) Are you surprised by any of the things that you have discovered so far?

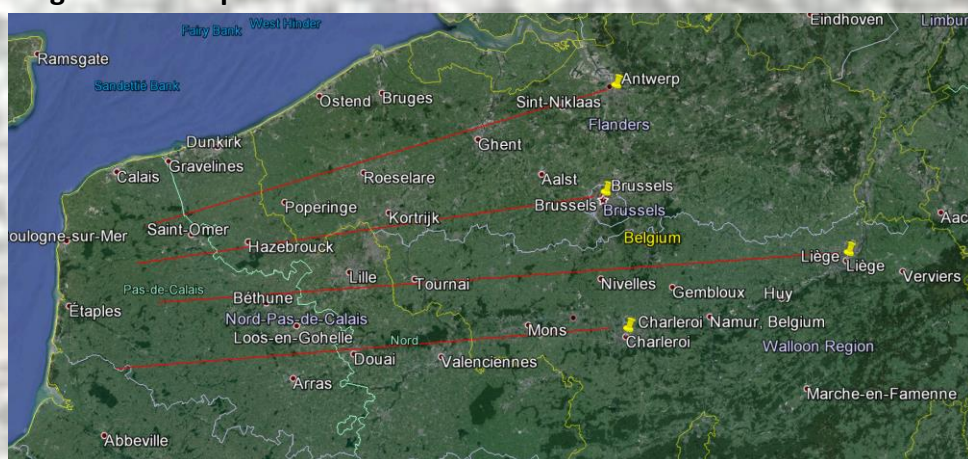
Fact File 2

The Holocaust in Nord Pas de Calais (NW France)

The Fate of the Local Jewish Community

The department of Nord Pas de Calais had its own well established French Jewish community in the larger towns, as well as a community of Jews of Polish origin, who often lived and worked in mining area. This community was deported in a large transport on the Jewish Festival of Rosh Hashanah, on 11 September 1942, conducted by the German police with the help the French police. Five hundred local Jews were arrested and sent to the Lille-Saint-Sauveur. From there they were deported via Malines / Mechelen in Belgium, to Auschwitz on 15 September 1942 on Transport X, which had 1,042 Jewish deportees. They arrived on 17 September and most were killed on arrival and only 12 survived the War.

Belgian Jews Deported to NW France

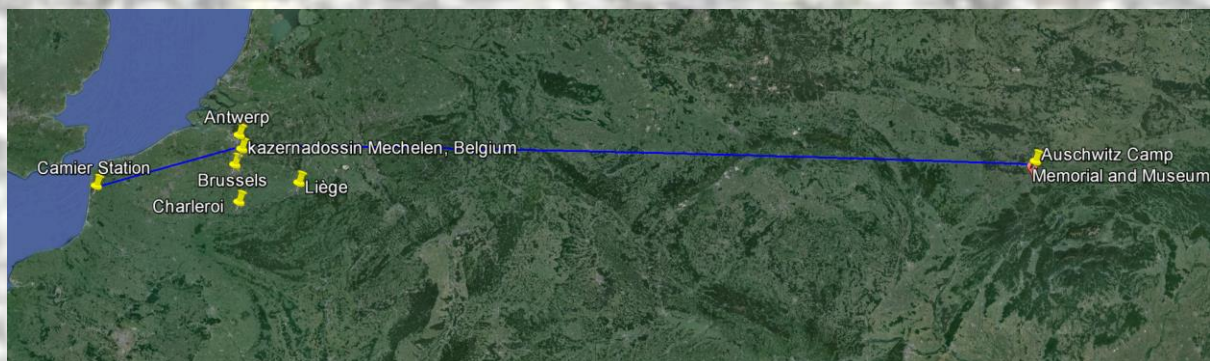


Origins and Journeys of Jewish Deportees from Belgium to NW France. Mapping: Google Maps 2014

In World War II a group of 2252 Jewish men, living in Belgium (some were born in Belgium but many from all across Europe) were stripped of their civil rights by the Germans, then thrown out of work and labelled as 'anti-social elements', and because they were unemployed forcibly separated from their families and deported to work as slave labour on Hitler's Atlantic Wall, in the vicinity of Boulogne and Calais, in July / August 1942. They were sent to some 15 permanent and temporary forced labour camps, mostly along the coast and they were later joined by 650 French Jews who had been deported from camps on the Island of Alderney in the Channel Islands. They worked on the Atlantic Wall for three months making bunkers and defences, as well as repairing bomb damage, for Organisation Todt (OT), Hitler's 'super' civil contractor.

This section of the Atlantic Wall was important for the Germans, firstly, because its big guns could be used to attack the Channel and the south coast of England, secondly, because in the early part of the War, the Germans thought that they could launch their planned invasion of England (Operation Sea Lion) from this area and its ports and huge beaches, thirdly, as the Germans began to lose the war, it was designed to stop the Allies invading France, and fourthly, it protected the 'Red Zone', the German restricted military zone behind the Channel ports, which is where the Germans built their secret terror weapons, the V1 and V2 rockets and the V3 super-gun.

The Belgian Jews laboured on the Wall until October 1942, when most were transported, via Mechelin, in Belgium, direct to Auschwitz concentration camp, where 96% were killed, at, or soon after, their arrival. Their families with the protection of fathers and sons already removed, were easy victims of the Gestapo were also send to be exterminated at Auschwitz.



Deportation to death at Auschwitz, from Camier Railway Station, via Mechelen; distance, 1,250 km. Mapping: Google Maps 2014

Collaboration and Local Resistance to the Holocaust

Local French people in the Nord Pas de Calais were generally not sympathetic to the Germans occupation because of bad memories from the German occupation of the area in World War I. Generally they did not want to help them and they rejected the Vichy regime which collaborated with the Germans.

Collaboration

Collaboration was largely limited in the Pas de Calais area to small groups of anti-Semitic extremists based in large towns, though some local informers would denounce individual Jews and some local political figures were collaborationists and the police did assist the German authorities.

Resistance

There was organised local resistance to the Nazis and a number of local people have been designated as 'Righteous among the Nations' for saving Jews.

Emile Carpentier of Boulogne (1888 – 1948) was a unionist; a keen advocate of human rights, who also became deputy Mayor of Outreau in 1925. In 1934, he was part of a Jewish rescue committee which helped German Jewish refugees to take shelter in Boulogne and when the Mayor of Outreau, Ernest Desclève, was taken prisoner, Carpentier took his place and continued to help Jews, such as the Czechoslovakian Jews, Ernest and Lily Dohan, and got them to safety at real personal risk, when the Germans forbade foreigners to live in the Red Zone.

He also became involved in the rescue of Jews from local concentration camps, including the Belgium Jew, Elias Merkreb, who had been prisoner at Hardelot Plage, Calais and Dannes and Condette. Merkreb, with 40 others, appears to have escaped a transport going via Boulogne and Carpentier, hid them with local French families; gave them false papers and ration cards enabling most to make their escape.

Railway workers also helped Jews escaping the camps by hiding them in their locomotives and the station master at Boulogne hid Edmund Weiss, a Czech Jew, after his escape for 8 days. Also local farmers hid Jews. Local people also helped Jews by throwing them food and cigarettes. David Shentow recalls how a local women recounted how she would throw bread to despondent prisoners near Condette, when the guards were not looking, and in one incident at Rang du Fliers, a German guard murdered a civilian for throwing cigarettes to political prisoners.

Some local institutions hid Jewish children, such as 'Colonie Scolaire', at the local beach resort and health spa at Berck Plage.

A local Resistance member also visited all of the local concentration camps at great personal risk and photographed them, at the request of London to find out about the Jewish workers, though it turned out to be impossible to find a way of sending the film back to London using carrier pigeons!

Activities

- 1) How many Jews lived in the Nord Pas de Calais at the start of the War and how many survived the end of the War?
- 2) Which Jews were deported to the Nord Pas de Calais and from which countries did they come from
- 3) Why did the Nazis bring Jews to the Nord Pas de Calais?
- 4) How many camps were they imprisoned in?
- 5) What kind of work did these Jews do for the Germans?
- 6) Did local people in Nord Pas de Calais support the German occupation and the Vichy government?
- 7) In what sorts of ways did local people and the local resistance help Jews escape the Germans?

Survivor Testimony No 1.

David Shentow's Testimony

David Shentow, is probably the only survivor from the construction of the Chemin des Juifs and was at Lager Tibor at Dannes. He was transported to Auschwitz on transport XVI and was one of only 4 survivors from that transport of 759 men. It provides a first-hand human context for some of the history and local camps.

Davis's testimony should be read either before going on visit 1 to the 'Chemin des Juifs', or 'Jews Road', or at the Memorial half-way along the 'Jew's Road'. Also, if you have the documentary available 'The Lost History of the Jew's Road, it would be valuable to watch this in preparation for your visit.

On 9 August 1942, my father and I received a letter from the Gestapo, ordering us to report the next morning to the Antwerp Railway Station. We could bring only one suitcase. We would be departing promptly at 6:00 a.m. When we arrived at the designated platform, we saw a group of men, and boys my age, neighbours and friends from our Pelikaanstraat community, surrounded by German soldiers, dressed in their green and grey Wehrmacht uniforms. We saw no guns or guard dogs.

At the base of the marble staircase leading to the railway platforms, I said goodbye to my mother and my two sisters. I would never set eyes on them again.

On entering our train, we had to hand our identity cards to one of the German soldiers. We arrived the same day, at 8:00 p.m., at the Dannes-Camiers railroad station. After leaving the train we were force-marched along a country road leading to Lager Tibor.

The sun was setting on a very hot August evening. Promptly upon our descent from the train, our guards hurried us a long and unlit country road past a village named Condette.

The work camp consisted of a number of wooden barracks. Once inside our building, we were assigned to one of the double bunk-beds. We were allowed to keep our suitcases and our travel clothing. We were told that we could use our money to purchase food from the guards.

We slept in the same clothes in double-bunk beds. No work clothes or uniforms were distributed to the prisoners. Other than running water from an outdoor installation, there were no laundry facilities or showers. Outdoor latrines were inside the camp.

The next morning we were assigned to building concrete pill-boxes, installing barbed-wire fences, and constructing concrete sea-wall defences. We were given to understand that all this work was needed in case of an Allied invasion of Europe. The place where I was engaged in slave labour was located in Boulogne-sur-Mer, some 18 km. away from Camp Tibor. We had to walk there and back in all kinds of weather. All my other activities were restricted to the interior of the camp.

My father had stomach pains and went to the camp doctor who said that he could not do anything for him and let him go back home back to Antwerp. He said, 'how can I go back home without my son, my son is here?' they said he is not going with you he has to stay. I had a nice long chat with my father and I said go, I will manage without you the next day a truck took about half a dozen men back home and I never saw him again. [Notes: his father was surprisingly send back home and he hid in a cellar for most of the rest of the war working as a tailor. However, shortly before the end of the war he was betrayed by a neighbour and sent to Auschwitz, where he was killed]

One day news came that the Gestapo had rounded up the remaining members of the Jewish community of Antwerp. The elderly, the infirm, mothers and children had been arrested and deported at midnight.

Another assignment involved the construction of a cement highway to be used by heavily armoured vehicles and tanks in preparation for Hitler's planned invasion of Great Britain.

Each day, engineers from Firma Moll, a German construction company, supervised our work. Their huge trucks and cranes moved heavy equipment and vast quantities of cement and assorted building materials to be used for the installation of military defences along the cliffs overlooking the beaches at Pas de Calais. The Wehrmacht ensured that Firma Moll received satisfactory results from our unpaid labour.

In France some people died, but they were buried - there was funeral and outside of the camp there was a little cemetery. They died may be not from old age, may be from beatings, one or two perhaps, no more than half a dozen in three months. [Notes: 15 Jewish prisoners died in the Nord Pas de Calais camps in the first three months of their labour, there are 6 Jewish graves at the Camp at Dannes]

Whenever a prisoner died, the Wehrmacht gave us permission to bury the dead inside the camp. Those occasions were marked by traditional Hebrew prayers, chanted with bitter tears and heavy hearts.

In September 1942 we heard rumours of an Allied invasion of Dieppe. We could hear the bombardments quite clearly. We were not required to go to work that day. We were so sure that the war was over and that we would be going home that I ran to the barracks and started packing my suitcase.

After some hours our guards came to tell us that the Canadian invasion had failed and that all the Canadian soldiers were dead. They ordered us back to work as if nothing extraordinary had transpired. We would not learn the whole story of this noble enterprise until the release of pertinent documents by British Intelligence Services.

A few weeks later, we learned that Hitler had decided not to invade England at this time. Instead, he had planned to invade the Soviet Union and to have his armies' battle their way to the rich oil-fields in Central Asia. Our work camp was to be closed, and we were to be sent back to Belgium.

We received from our guards a loaf of bread and a bit of jam. I was disturbed to hear that these meager rations were to last us for four days. I prepared my suitcase and joined the other prisoners in our return march to the railway station at Dannes-Camiers where guards herded us on a passenger train headed for the Caserne Dossin at Malines.

Once our train had come to rest in the area in front of the Caserne, I saw another passenger train being attached to the one in which we had been traveling. Through the windows I could see that the passengers were composed of elderly men and women, young women, and mothers with babies and small children. [David was deported on transport XVI 31.10.42]

Suddenly the train began to move, and we began to see the Belgian countryside disappear behind us as we traveled eastward. The train continued, non-stop, for four days and four nights. As we passed through Germany into Poland, we could see the names of important cities in the various train stations along our route.

Finally the train slowed down and came to a complete halt. It was 4:00 p.m. The sign in the train station read Auschwitz.

Alongside of the station platform I could see men dressed in what appeared to me to be striped pajamas and striped caps. I noticed that they were wearing wooden clogs on their bare feet. They all seemed tired and frightened and they all had their heads shaved.

Suddenly we were surrounded by S.S. guards holding on to vicious guard dogs, German Shepherds, trained to rip out a prisoner's throat instantaneously upon command.

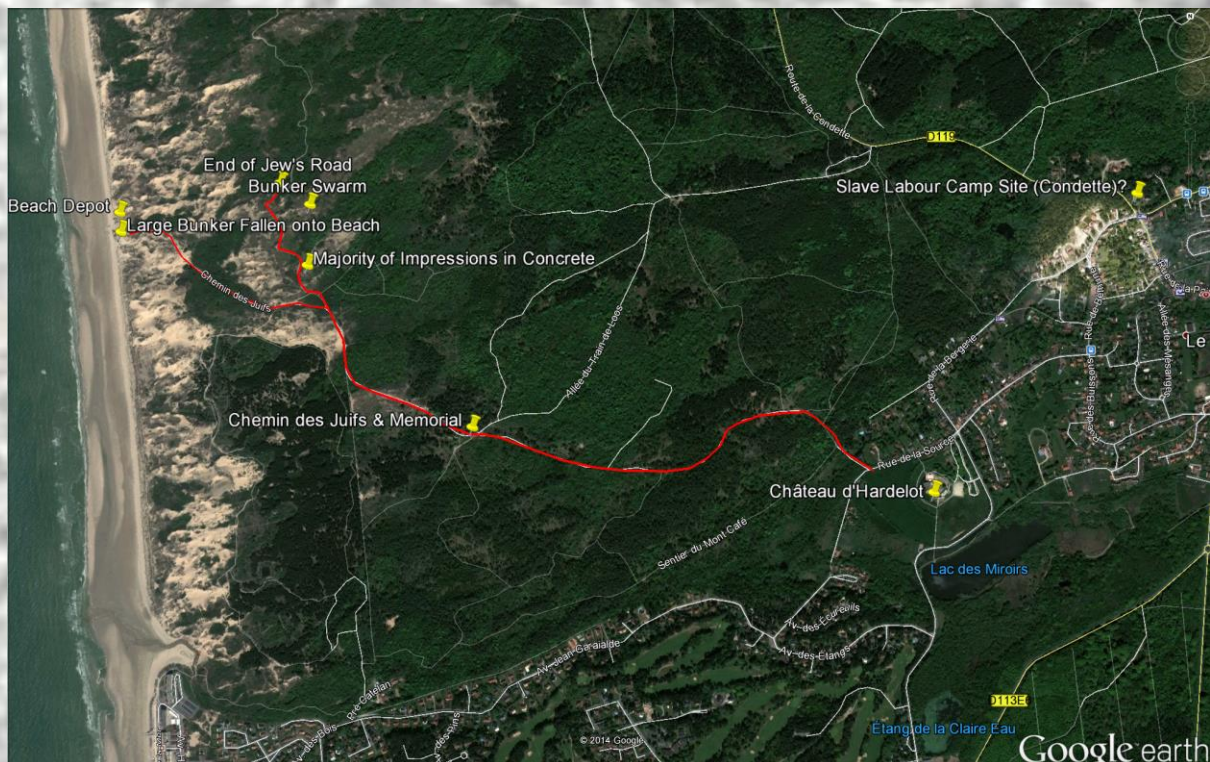
Megaphones, used at full power, ordered us to vacate the train immediately. We had less than ten seconds to obey that first command... Henceforth I was Kazetnik (Prisoner) 72585. [David was selected to work and not to be immediately exterminated on his arrival at Auschwitz. He survived this and several other camps, as well as a 'death march' and being pistol whipped on his head, shortly before he was liberated]

This road, named Le Chemin des Juifs, still exists. Because the members of the Wehrmacht were too impatient to inspect the work before the concrete was dry, the surface of the road bears the marks of the paw-prints of the German Shepherd guard dogs. One can still see the scars left by the regulation heavy-duty hobnailed boots worn by the members of the Wehrmacht.

Some years ago, during a trip to Belgium, a local friend of ours drove my wife and me to Dannes-Camiers and to the location where one could still see the remains of the camp. As we came to the concrete road, we saw a sign, 'Le Chemin des Juifs'. Coming towards us was a group of French high-school students. We decided to ask them what they knew of this road and the significance of this road sign. The students generally agreed amongst themselves that this site 'was most likely a road, which the Jews had taken during the Crusades'! Their answer was an indication of how little they had been taught about the collaboration of the French government and the Roman Catholic clergy in sending French citizens and non-citizens of the Jewish faith to their death in Auschwitz.

Further down that road, we came across an older woman who told us that she recalled seeing the Germans marching some prisoners along the road past her house. She told us how moved she was by those captives, hungry and dispirited. She waited until the guards had passed her house before throwing pieces of bread to the marchers.

Visit 1 – The Jew's Road 'Chemin des Juifs'



Getting There

This visit takes place near to Hardelot Chateau, close to the villages of Condette and Hardelot sur Plage. To start the walk, go to Hardelot Chateau via the village of Condette (follow sign-posts) and park at the car park (where there is provision for coaches and a café and facilities on site). From the car park entrance, when leaving the castle with the café on the left, turn left on to a dead-end small road (Rue de la Source) with some residential houses and proceed 290m, when on the right there is a track and then an entry (with information board and route indicator) on to the Chemin des Juifs,

via a wooden chicane into the Forêt Domaniale d'Ecault. Follow the concrete road through the forest and sand dunes until the Jewish memorial is reached after 1.4 km. The road at this point is largely flat. The activities for this walk take place from the Jewish Memorial on-wards. The Jew's Road can then be followed through the dunes and Forest for another 0.7km until a fork in the road is reached with the left-hand turn going down to the beach and the right-hand turn climbing another 0.5 km to a high point in the dunes and the majority of the bunkers and casements. It is at the point that the road turns up-hill that the greatest concentration of evidence of the building and builders of the road can be found. The path down to the beach is also worth walking, if there is time, though the path is broken by stretches of dune and sand so there is no wheel-chair access to this section, but there are remains of WWII barbed wire in the dunes and an impressive casement that has tumbled down onto the beach and at low tide, as well as remains of wooden beach defences in the foreshore. The return route is the same way as you arrive, though a circular route through more of the nationally important dune reserve can be made by joining with the Sentier du Mont Café by turning right at the Jewish Memorial (map or guide required).

The memorial can also be accessed from Hardelot itself, with the forest and a spur of the Jew's Road accessed from the Pre Catalan and the St Augustine Memorial cross near the PGL centre. However, this is more difficult to navigate and does not provide wheel-chair access.

Safety

Care and common sense should be used when exploring the bunkers at end of the Chemin des Juifs as some of the lighter constructions may have that crumbling brick-work or loose concrete that could present a hazard to the careless. Also, the shifting sands can reveal a variety of metal junk and objects (which can be interesting) but it is important not to pick up anything that you do not know what it is, in the rare case that any old munitions are exposed.

Activities

Your task on this walk on the Jew's Road (Chemin des Juifs) is to work as historical detectives to find and record evidence about the history of the road and to use other information that you have already discovered, or the additional evidence at the back of this booklet, to provide fuller answers.

In particular you will need to answer the following questions by the end of the visit and provide evidence that you have recorded on the visit.

- 1) Where is the Jew's Road?
- 2) Why was its location important to the builders?
- 3) When the Jew's Road built and what was important about the time that it was built?
- 4) Why was the Jew's Road made?
- 5) How was it built?
- 6) Who built the Jew's Road and what happened to them?

To help you to do this listen or read the testimony given by David Shentow first and then you will need to find and draw / photograph the following evidence as you go along the Jew's Road.

Record and draw the Memorial and its inscription (raised in 1992) at the cross-roads at the middle of the Jew's Road. If you cannot translate the French make sure that you ask your teacher of guide to give you a translation.

Make sure that you look out for the foot-prints and impressions in the concrete and record them – you can try rubbings using paper. They start near to the site of the Memorial, but most are in the final section of the road as it climbs into the high dunes. Pay particular attention to the style of foot-ware as this is important evidence. You should be able to find a) hob-nailed boot prints b) civilian shoes c) wooden clogs (with metal protective cleats) Look out for a bare foot-print near to the memorial (not always visible due to the sand) in particular. For each foot-print you find, say what sort of person they might belong to and why. Also look for animal prints and explain what these animals were doing on the road.

hob-nailed boot prints

civilian shoes

wooden clogs

bare foot-print

Animal Print 1

Animal Print 2

Evidence of sledges

Evidence of Construction - Evidence of light-railway sleepers

Any other impressions / objects.

How far can you see from the highest point on the Jew's Road and what does this tell you about the military importance of this place? (Clues: shipping in the Channel, proximity to England and the large beaches).

Visit 2 – The Site of Camp Tibor at Dannes, the Camp Memorial and Jewish Graves and Concrete Bunkers made by Slave workers.

Your second visit goes to the site of one of the main Jewish concentration camps in the Nord Pas de Calais: Camp Tibor. It also takes in a visit to the graves of Jewish victims of the Holocaust who died at the camp. You will also see some of the major German fortifications of the area, including the Kriegsmarine, which was a massive munitions store for the German Navy. The walk will give you a good sense of the war in this area and how slave labour was vital for the German war machine in constructing its fortifications and defences.

Activity

As you go around the walk route learn about what you are seeing using the guide below and asking your guide or leader. Also record your own impressions of the sites as your task afterwards will be to produce an A4 or A3 Trail Guide, with map and illustrations.

You will also need to explain on your guide why it is important to visit these sites and why we might want to preserve them for the future.

Sights along the walk

German Personnel Bunker near Dunette



The German 'Tobruk' Bunker near Dunette constructed with forced labour

This restored bunker is on the flank of Mont St Frieux (a giant sand-dune) which is a short detour off the Chemin du Facteur. This has been restored by local enthusiasts and is an excellent example of a 'Tobruk' type of a personnel bunker, which includes gas protection and a water supply. It is called a Tobruk type as it is type developed by Field Marshall in the sandy conditions of the North Africa campaign and it recognised by its round turret used for observation and a machine gun. This is the most common type in N. France and over 1,000 were built from January 1943 and each bunker would consume 485 cubic meters of concrete indicating something of the pure labour needed for thier construction. The interior still preserves some of the original signs in German painted on the wall. Originally the bunker would have been more buried than it is now. These bunkers were constructed by forced labour and may well have included the residual Jewish labour group from the camp at Dannes.

Hill-top Fortress of Mt St Frieux

The bunker just visited, defends one of the approaches to the very extensive hill-top fortress of Mont St Frieux (elevation 153m), which had more than 18 main bunkers and a German radar station and was part of the in-depth defences along the coast favoured by Rommel as well as controlling large sections of the channel and approaches to the River Canche. Again it is believed that forced Jewish labour was used in it construction. Other bunkers may be spotted hidden along the line of the woods on the flanks of Mt St Frieux.

Chemin du Facteur

The Chemin du Facteur was once the main road to Boulogne and was the route taken by the Jewish prisoners when they walked to the Chemin des Juifs work site, over 4 miles away, as well as far as Boulogne 7 miles away, where they worked on other defences, so the prisoners would be walking long distances in all weathers, as well as engaging in arduous work. As a matter of policy the Germans would not 'waste' transport on Jewish prisoners.

Cement Works at Dannes



View of the cement works at Dannes-Camier from the hills to the east

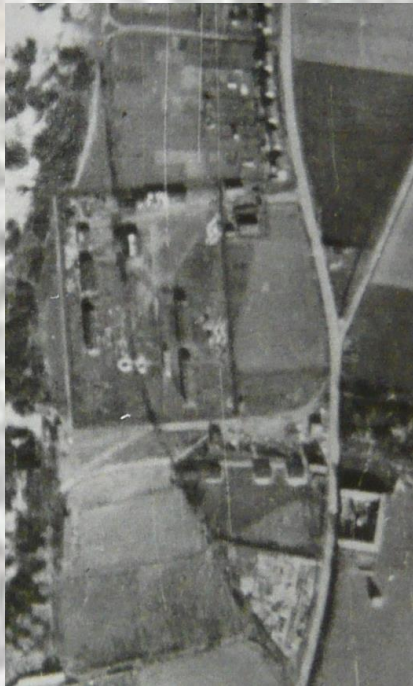
As you approach Dannes you will see the chimneys of the very important local cement factory and the extensive scarring scars created by the excavation of chalk. This is important in the war-time story, as the Germans consumed vast amounts of concrete in building the Atlantic Wall and the V Rocket Block Houses, and the local concrete factory with its connection to the main railway line and other local light railway lines, would have been of considerable importance to them.

Site of Lager Tibor



An over-view of the site of Camp Tibor (large corn field in middle and behind)

The site of Lager Tibor lies either side of the Chemin du Facteur after crossing the D140 and the edge of the camp is reached just as you get level with the end of the row of houses along the minor road leading into Dannes and the south end of the camp is reached just before you get level with the wall of the cemetery. The war-time aerial imagery suggests that the track actually passed through the middle of the camp, which consisted of 6 - 12 or more barrack huts and other buildings, as well as the main gate area opening onto the road. Research shows that the main camp compound was c. 112 x 165 m and the gate complex was c. 35 x 40 m. The largest huts were c. 30 m in length.



A Plan of Camp Tibor (an over-lay on the current landscape from a WWII aerial photograph shown below) Mapping: Google Maps 2014

Camp Tibor was started around June 1942. The first group of prisoners probably arrived on 5 August, 1942, with a group of Belgian Jewish deportees arriving at Dannes-Camiers railway station. From June 1942, to October 1942, there were a 1,000 Jews of different nationalities and a number of Belgians but by the end of October 1942 the number was reduced to plus or minus 100 Jews due to most being sent to Auschwitz and there were about 700 Jews left across all of the French camps. The Jews were segregated within the camp from other prisoner groups, who included French, Italian, Spanish and Russian prisoners (POWs and at the end of the War Russian children). Prisoners worked 10 hours a day and had poor medical care, very little food and regular beatings. The camp commanders were mostly very brutal towards the Jews resulting in broken limbs and teeth. Dannes became the primary and central local camp used to assemble and register the new arrivals and then allocate prisoners to the other camps or Komandos. Conditions at the camp were arduous and often brutal. The end of the camp came on 5 September 1944, when the Germans started to evacuate all of the prisoners with them and organized a train at Boulogne to deport the prisoners. However, the transport was liberated by the Belgian resistance at Dexmude.

The current memorial is c. 68 m south of the perimeter of the camp. While most traces of the camp are now gone, the camp did survive the end of the war and was used temporarily as a POW camp for captured Germans and the buildings themselves may have survived until as late as the 1970s. The memorial to the slave labour camp can be found not far from the gate to the cemetery, towards the rear and the six Jewish graves are to the left of the memorial and next to the Commonwealth war graves. The original grave markers for the Jewish deportees were crude makeshift markers that were not replaced until sometime after 1985.



Jewish Slave Worker Graves at Dannes (row at rear)

The Kriegsmarine



The Kriegsmarine a giant naval munitions store built with forced labour

The Kriegsmarine is an important relic of the Nazi occupation and was a naval munitions store for the German navy ('Kriegsmarine') and also provided tunnels to be used by trains as air-raid shelters. (Safety: please note it is not recommended to go far past the L shaped entrances of the tunnels, as some of the roof-linings in the main parts of the tunnel are falling into the tunnels and are hazardous).

World War II intelligence reports relate that the site was under construction from August 1941 and was still under construction in October 1943. The site would have been constructed by forced labour and it is likely that Jews from both the nearby camps at Dannes and also at Camier, could have taken part in the construction.



Abandoned German mines in the Kriegsmarine discovered in 1973 (Police photograph)

Today you can see twenty-two massive concrete tunnels, 4 m high, extending 50 m into a low chalk hill. The tunnels have a frontage of c. 180 m, and the majority are served by a continuous railway platform which appears to have been linked by a spur to the nearby main railway line and other sidings. The concrete facing of part of the site is deliberately corrugated to allow grass to grow and conceal it. The Kriegsmarine was a naval munitions store and kept large stocks of mines

which could be rapidly off-loaded from munitions trains stopping along the giant railway platform and railway line that runs along the entire frontage of the tunnels. At the end of the war the complex was abandoned and in 1973 tunnel no. 6 was found to be filled with 83 mines which subsequently had to be emptied and destroyed at sea in the 1976! There was also two railway tunnels at the south end of the complex which could protect entire trains (including V2 weapons trains) from aerial attack. These tunnel entrances are now blocked. Field Marshall Rommel inspected this site and a propaganda film shows him walking down the length of the railway platform with his henchmen.



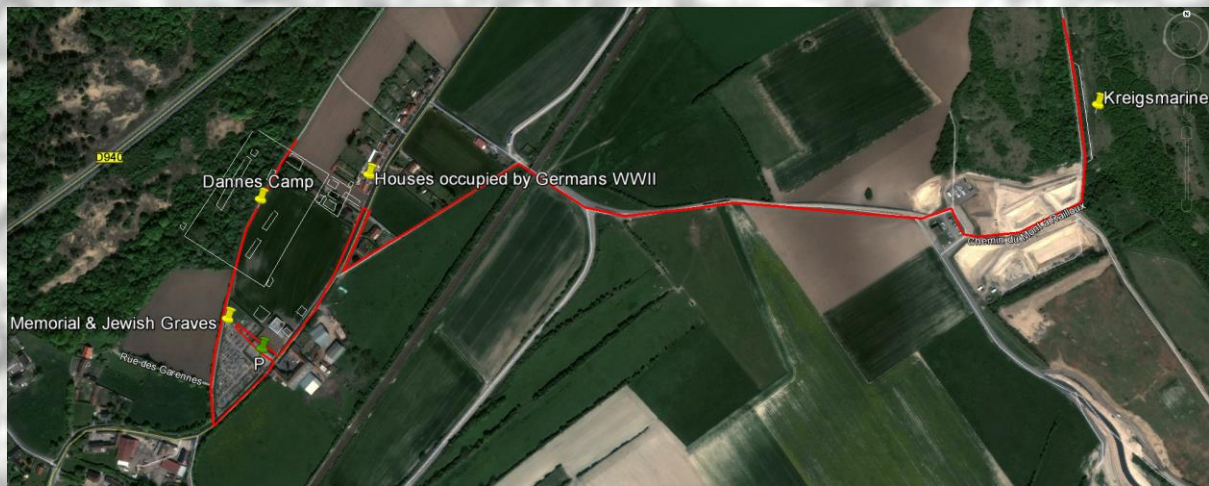
A still from a German Propaganda film showing Rommel inspecting the Kriegsmarine soon after completion (note the railway line and platform running the whole length)

The Kriegsmarine in WWII being inspected by Rommel and Nazi top-brass

Getting There and Directions

There are two main options in visiting the site of the Camp at Dannes.

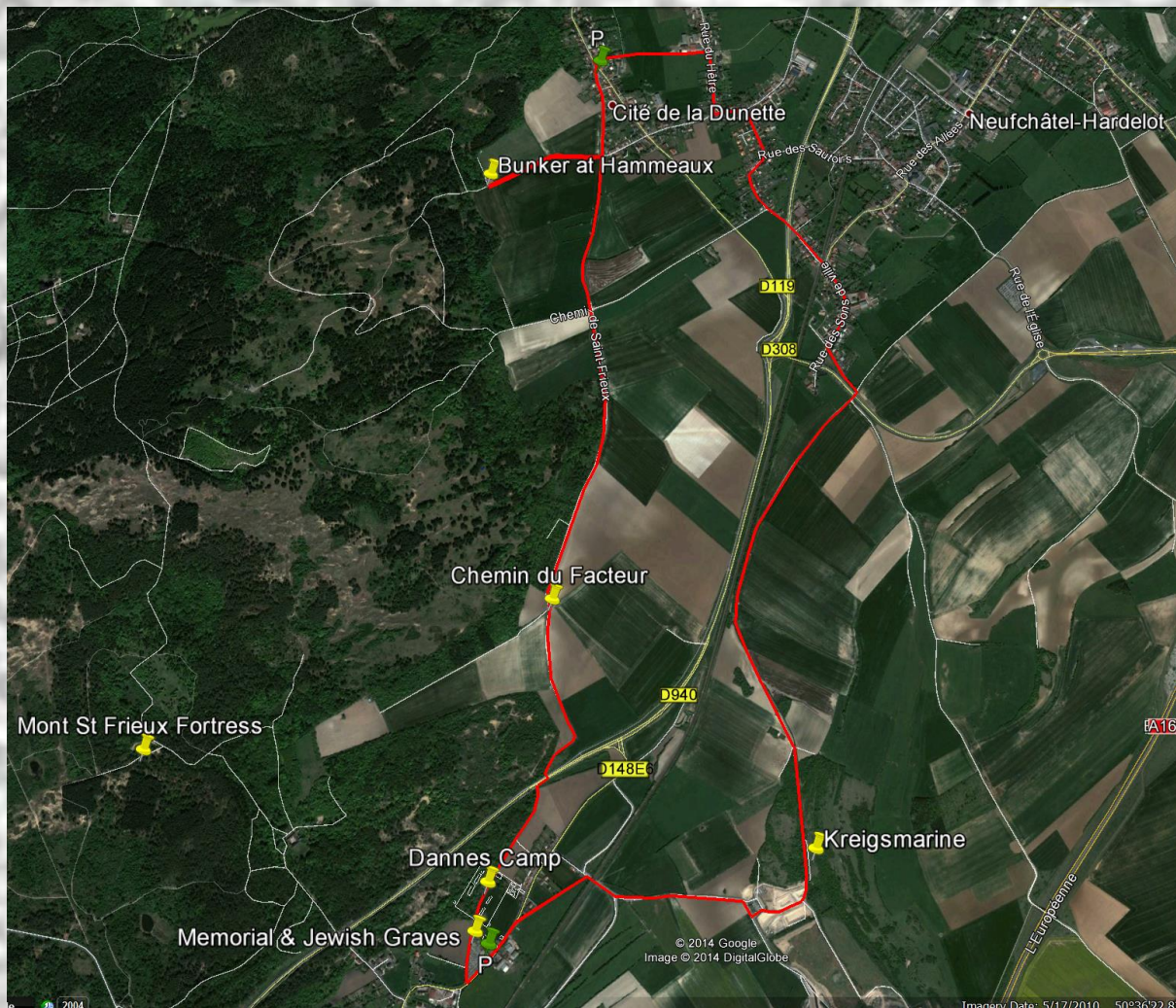
Option 1 (short) 3.74km



Mapping: Google Maps 2014

The first shorter, in time and walking, is to drive to the public car park in front of the new municipal cemetery, on the Rue des Deportés at the edge of Dannes (off the D940 and then the D148E). From here the Memorial to the Camp at Dannes and the Jewish Graves (which are next to the Commonwealth War Graves) are just 40 meters away, at the back of the cemetery, through the cemetery gate. The site of the camp can then be seen, both from alongside the Rue des Deportés, or by walking along the track, the Chemin du Facteur, that lies just behind the cemetery. This in fact passes through what was the centre of the camp and was the road along which the despondent prisoners marched long distances to work. The only visible remains relating to the camp are the three houses which were occupied by camp guards immediately adjacent to what was the camp entrance on the D148E. The name of the street also relates to the prisoners and also a plaque to the deportees can be seen on the wall of Camier Station 2.1 km to the south. From here a walk of 1.2 km takes you to the Kriegsmarine, which is partly on an un-metalled road and uphill (for detailed access instructions see below).

Option 2 (Longer) 9.2 km



Mapping: Google Maps 2014

The second option is a longer round walk, which has the advantage of giving a much better overview of the World War II sites and their context, as well as displaying some of the attractive typical local landscapes and points of local interest. The total walk is 9.2 km (5.7 miles) and takes 2 ½ hours. Walking shoes, a map (IGN 2104 ET, Carte de Radonnee, Boulogne-Sur-Mer) and water are recommended. The Walk follows a recognised local walking circuit and rights of way published by Neufchatel-Hardelot (Circuit no. 5 'Le Chemin Du Facteur'), though it does not reference the camp or Holocaust in its circuit.

To take this walk it is best to start from the parking at Cite de las Dunnette on the D119, four km from Hardelot . From here first head to the restored bunker on the flank of Mont St Frieux which is a short detour off the Chemin du Facteur.

On returning to the Chemin du Facteur continue south towards Dannes, on the route taken by Jewish prisoners walking to distant worksites. As you approach Dannes you will see the chimneys of the local cement factory and the scars of chalk quarrying an important industry for the occupying Germans.

After crossing the D140 (care needed) you will pass through the site of Lager Tibor. The north end of the site is just level with the row of houses to the east and the south end just before the wall of the cemetery is reached.

After turning left at the junction of the Rue de Deportees and proceeding to the entry to the new municipal cemetery, the memorial to the slave labour camp can be found not far from the gate to the cemetery, towards the rear and the six Jewish graves are to the left of the memorial and next to the Common Wealth war graves.

On leaving the cemetery and turning left onto the Rue des Deportees, the Kriegsmarine can be approached via a track joining the Rue des Tunnels and then onwards to the railway bridge and SITA waste recycling plant. At the SITA plant you follow a pipeline behind a board with arrows to get to the south-end of the Kriegsmarine (caution, some of the tunnels are in danger of roof collapse).

After leaving the Kriegsmarine, follow the Rue de la Chappelle, turning right onto the Rue des Sons de Ville, crossing the D940 with care, turning left in to the Rue de la Riviere, Right into Rue du Hetre, then left onto a footpath with a cycle bar on it (opposite no. 35), running alongside a large barn, and after 250 m you will exit nearly opposite the starting point to your left.

Follow-up Work

Your fieldwork in France can be followed-up in a variety of ways. However, it is important to not treat what you have learnt as just 'historical facts'. There are still people alive who have been affected by these or similar events and these events have also shaped the world that you live in. For example the fact that we are in the EU is partly a response to the War to try and make sure that European nations do not go to war against each other again and that we can collaborate to the collective good. Racism and anti-Semitism are still active in Europe and require everyone to do their part to continue to resist hatred and intolerance. Also, sadly slavery is still present in different forms in Europe and across the world and is a major evil. Slavery also exists in the UK in towns, cities and the countryside.

The following are suggestions for follow-up work.

Discussion Work

- a) How has your visit to France changed (if at all) your understanding of the Holocaust?

- b) Discuss the relevance of World War II history for today's generation
- c) Was the fight against Nazism and fascism in World War II a moral struggle?

Research

- d) What makes the Holocaust stand-out as a key example (or unique) example of an attempted genocide?
- e) Research modern attempts at genocide since World War II. Is genocide still a danger?
- f) Find out if there are any slave labour camps anywhere in the world today?
- g) Research the problem of slavery in the UK today. Are you surprised by what you discover?

Project Work

- h) Write a project on the Holocaust and slavery in NW France.

Display Work

- i) Create a class display on your visit to France so others can share your visit and experiences.
- j) Create art-work that sums up your individual response to your fieldwork.

Historical Resources

Orders by Hitler to complete the Atlantic Wall

Hitler issued a number of Fuhrer Directives to decree the building of the Atlantic Wall, first as an offensive structure and then as the war started to go against the Germans, for defence.

Hitler issued Fuhrer Directive No. 16 in July, 1940, which decreed that fortified coastal batteries would be created on the coast of the Pas de Calais, to control the Straits of Dover and to provide cover for any invasion Armada.

On 13 August 1942, Hitler had a formal meeting with Speer and senior engineering staff, to fully define the role and disposition of the Wall. It was decided that the Russian Front was the priority and that, 'the other fronts can only be defended with modest forces... During the winter, with fanatical zeal, a fortress [the Atlantic Wall] must be built which will hold in all circumstances... excepting by an attack lasting for weeks.'

This was followed by;

'Adolf Hitler Fuhrer Directive 51, November 3, 1943', which stated, '...All signs point to an offensive against the Western Front of Europe no later than spring and perhaps earlier. For that reason, I can no longer justify the further

weakening of the West in favour of other theatres of war. I have therefore decided to strengthen the defences in the West particularly at place from which we shall launch our long-range war [with V. Rockets] against England...'

Nazi Giant Artillery Pieces and slave labour.



The Lindemann Batterie above appears to be a re-used naval gun from a destroyer installed into a very deep concrete bunker inland near Sangatte and was the first constructed by Belgian Jewish slave labour. The Sangatte camp was opened on 12 September 1941 and is believed to be the first Jewish camp in the region well in advance of the rest.

Nazi Secret Weapons

The Nord Pas de Calais was a crucial site for the Germans to build launch sites for their secret weapons, rockets and guns that could attack London and other targets in the South East of England. Aerial reconnaissance flights by the Americans and British revealed the presence of so-called 'Heavy Sites' where the Germans were building their weapons in massive bunkers. This photograph from the end of the war celebrates the USAF photographic flights and an important photograph of the VI site at Siracourt in the Nord Pas de Calais. Most of these sites were constructed using slave labourer taken from across Europe, Africa and Indo-China, both Jewish and non-Jewish.

SORTIE : US7GR/2263
FLOWN : 7 JULY 1944
ALTITUDE: 50'-500'
PILOT : LT.COL. NORRIS E. HARTWELL JR.
7TH PHOTO GP.



TARGET : SIRACOURT (Special Military Construction)

HISTORY : This site has been bombed and photographed repeatedly both by the R.A.F. and U.S. 8th AIR FORCE. Interpretation has often been hampered by bad halation, as the main construction is surrounded by thousands of craters.

SORTIE : This photograph, one of the best of this target, together with others taken during the flight enabled experts to make accurate measurements, draw up more detailed plans and modify former conclusions derived from small scale verticals.

A close-up of the photograph shows details of construction method for building in concrete – giant diggers, a light-railway for moving materials, wooden shuttering and scaffolding for moulding the concrete when it is poured. The building of a major block house required a workforce of around 40,000 men.

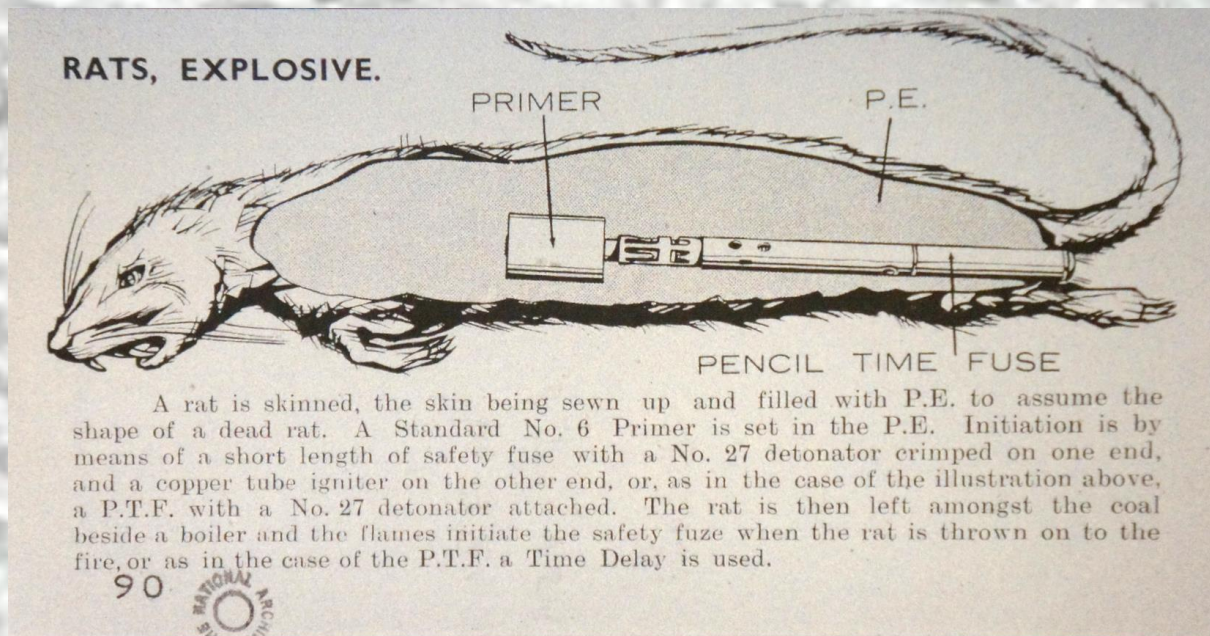


Another photograph (from the Island of Alderney) shows a close-up of prisoner working using a shovel next to a new bunker. Hand-digging was crucial to even the largest projects.



Evidence for Resistance.

The British and the SOE worked with the French Resistance to frustrate the enemy. Acts of sabotage were common and the 'exploding rat' was very successful in destroying railway locomotives, as rail employees would often shovel up the 'dead rat' and throw it into the furnace of their steam locomotive, with explosive results!



Evidence of for Boots and Clog imprints on the Jew's Road

The following clogs were made in Bergen-Belsen Concentration camp. They are typical prisoner foot-ware as many concentration camp prisoners, where they did not keep their own foot-wear, and were issued with camp foot-ware, would be given wooden-soled clogs, reinforced with cleats to protect the sole from wear. The rest of the shoe is made of recycled materials from other old shoes. (from Northampton Bot and Shoe Museum). The Belgian Jewish prisoners in the Nord Pas de Calais often wore their own shoes and clothes, but there is evidence for wooden shoes.



Most German Army (Wehrmacht) boots were hob-nailed and would have horse shoe shaped cleats

Field Marshal, Irwin Rommel



Rommel during his inspection of the Atlantic Wall – a still from a propaganda film

While Rommel is commonly regarded as a great general by both sides of the World War II conflict, it is not well known that he was placed in charge of the Atlantic Wall during its most intensive phase of construction by Hitler, from November 1943 to July 1944, when he was again wounded by Allied action. This meant that he was in charge of many thousands of slave workers, including Jews and stayed in a villa in Hardelot close to several of the camps. He made all of the workers on the Atlantic Wall work much harder and caused suffering and was for the remaining Jews in the French camps, part of their Holocaust journey.

The Arithmetic of Transportation and Death for Jews in the French Camps

The following lists the main transports of Jews from the camps in France though these transports were often combined with additional wagons with other deportees including women and children at Mechelen. The High-lighted transports were the 4 main transports of Belgian Jews from the camps in France. Note the survival rates. David Shentow was on no. 7 with only 4 survivors.

Transport No. / Date / Total Nos. in Transport / Number of survivors

1. I (4.8.42, 1000 / 7)
2. IX (12.9.42, 1000 / 29)
3. XI (26.9.42, 1,745 / 30)
4. XII (10.10.43, 1,000 / 28)
5. XIV (24.10.42, 997 / 16) = 318 men - 11 male survivors*
6. XV (24.10.42, 476 / 28) = 314 men - 26 male survivors*
7. XVI (31.10.42, 994 / 61) = 759 men - 4 male survivors*

8. XVII (31.10.42, 939 / 43 = 645 men - 36 survivors*)
9. XVII (15.1.43, 1,000 / 13)
10. XVIII (15.1.43, 1,000 / 13)
11. XIX (15.1.43, 626 / 8)
12. XX (19.4.43, 1,577 / 159)
13. XXI (31.7.43, 1,523 / 39)
14. XXII A (20.9.43, 655 / 51)
15. XXII B (20.9.43, 815 / -)
16. XXIII (15.1.44, 644 / 101)
17. XXIV (4.4.44, 606 / 133)
18. Z (13.12.43, 134 / 68)

The Testimony of Edmund Weiss a Jewish prisoner of Camp Tibor

One further valuable account of Lager Tibor is given by prisoner Edmund Weiss, a Czech Jew, who describes the camp towards the end of the War. He also notes the temporary improvement of conditions for prisoners in 1943 (something that is also evidenced at Camp Sylt in the Channel Islands when temporary controls were exerted over the SS by the Wehrmachtⁱ).

The ITS records show that Edmund Weisz [sic] was born in Presov [Presovice?] in the Czech Republic (14.11.1909) and was part of the Belgian cohort of deportees. He had initially been encamped in Boulogne Sur Mer (working for Ph. Holzmann), then Isques (for Leonard Hanbuch & Sohne) and finally Dannes and Condette (for Julius Berger), before he was liberated after being marched to Samer and Boulogne, making his escape from the latter location.

‘About the same time all Jews, in the other four concentration camps of Northern France, were deported to Poland. All the remaining inmates were then collected in one camp at Dannes-Camiers nr Boulogne and were employed on road-making and fortification etc. The Officer in charge of this camp was [...] Kohler who excelled in brutality. In April 1945 a transport of 350 Russians, including children, arrived from Smolensk bringing the number of inmates at the camp up to 750. The Following transports also arrived:

May 1943: 200 Spaniards

Jun 1943: 250 Frenchmen

Dec 1943: 500 Frenchmen

After the invasion, the guards were reinforced, and the Camp Cammandent was arrested for 'mild treatment of the Jews'. This man had replaced Koehler in Dec 1943. His name was *Truppenfuh*. Rutter, a non-party member and he was succeded by *Obertruppenfuh*. Ullrich, an exceptional brutal type, notorious for his brutal treatment of Jews in Germany. At the end of August 1944 he decamped with all the valuables belonging to the inmates, leaving his guards (2 Germans and 14 Dutchmen) behind. At the beginning of Sep 1944, we were all marched in the direction of Samer where we were put into a camp and left for 2 days without food and water. On Sept 5th we were marched to Boulogne and it was intended to entrain us from there to Germany. It was here I found an opportunity to escape and I remained eight days in hiding with the Stationmaster Eugene Streibig, 68, Rue Felix Adam and during the armistice, I left Boulogne with the population and surrendered to the English. (19 May 45) (WO 208/3638 and WO 208/3656)
