

**Lernen aus der Geschichte e.V.**

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Das mehrsprachige Webportal publiziert fortlaufend Informationen zur historisch-politischen Bildung in Schulen, Gedenkstätten und anderen Einrichtungen zur Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Schwerpunkte bilden der Nationalsozialismus, der Zweite Weltkrieg sowie die Folgegeschichte in den Ländern Europas bis zu den politischen Umbrüchen 1989.

Dabei nimmt es Bildungsangebote in den Fokus, die einen Gegenwartsbezug der Geschichte herausstellen und bietet einen Erfahrungsaustausch über historisch-politische Bildung in Europa an.

## **A short overview of the conditions at the Branch Concentration Camp Wittenberge**

There are varying accounts of the conditions in the Branch Concentration Camp Wittenberge, since they changed quite often.

During peak times, 500-600 prisoners were interned there. Inmates report that maltreatment and four to six deaths, declared as accidents, were everyday occurrences.

The prisoners lived in old wooden barracks that were quite cold. The walls and ceilings had many holes, so that it often snowed through in winter.

There were two large dormitories with double-bunk beds. They had well-stuffed straw sacks for mattresses, and each inmate got three blankets. Cleanliness and orderliness were very important.

Another prisoner says there were triple-bunk beds without sheets, and that each prisoner only got one blanket.

Hygienic conditions were primitive, and often there was no water. Still, regular baths and changes of clothes and sheets were very important. In spite of this, many prisoners had fleas, lice and scabies.

Not until June 1943, was a doctor assigned Wittenberge.

Some of the prisoners got white armbands. They were allowed to pass the guards without accompaniment, but not the main gate.

Prisoners and civilians worked closely together, so that some inmates were able to obtain civilian clothing and leave the camp through the main gate. No one knows what became of them.

The prisoners did construction and cleanup work. Methods of execution in the camp were quite sadistic. For example, people got hit by the 20 m high yeast vat, run over by railway cars, torn apart by bloodhounds or killed by water cannons.

The prisoners report that Wittenberge was not the worst of camps. Discipline was not as harsh as elsewhere, and there was exceptional freedom during work. On Saturdays, the prisoners were given beer and cigarettes. Reports of musical evenings, however, are false.

(A summary of reports by former prisoners of the Branch Concentration Camp Wittenberge)