

Slovak POWs

In late August 1944, in the Slovak Republic, an ally of the Third Reich, broke out a national uprising. After two months of fighting, it was brutally suppressed by German forces and fascist Slovak units, and more than 15,000 participants in the uprising were taken prisoner by the Wehrmacht. Up to 10 % of the Slovak prisoners-of-war were transported to Stalag 344 Lamsdorf. One of them was Ladislav Kavec who left valuable accounts of his captivity.

The harsh realities of life in the camp placed the Slovaks quite low in the hierarchy of treatment, but although the German authorities made a point of dealing with the new POWs the same as Soviet and Italian prisoners-of-war, the fortunes of the insurgents from the southern side of the Carpathians was somewhat better. They spent the first night in an empty hut, allegedly because of the need to disinfect their clothing. Later, they were accommodated next to the Warsaw insurgents, Soviet, Italian and French prisoners-of-war. Their huts were located in the most neglected and devastated part of the camp. Due to insufficient food portions, they often suffered from hunger.

The stay of the majority of Slovaks in Stalag 344 Lamsdorf was short, as was in their case, this camp turned out to be a stopover on the way to other camps, including Stalag VIII A Görlitz (now Zgorzelec) or Stalag X B Sandbostel.

As a result, only a little more than 100 prisoners of this group set off on the forced march from the camp in January 1945.

In total, 1,600 participants of the Slovak National Uprising passed through Stalag 344 Lamsdorf. The deaths of none of them was recorded in this camp.