

HISTORY TRAIL ODER-WARTA 1945

At the end of the Second World War, the heaviest fighting in the Oder-Warta region left scars that are still visible today. Follow the cross-border history trail in the footsteps of the events of spring 1945.

On 31 January 1945, the first units of the Soviet Army reached the Oder River and established themselves there. Heavy fighting broke out entlang the present-day border river between Poland and Germany, resulting in countless casualties and devastating destruction of towns, villages and infrastructure by the end of April 1945.

Anklam



The locations on the 1945 War Events History Trail vividly convey the dramatic events at the end of the Second World War. These include former prisons and camps such as the Sonnenburg Penitentiary in Stońsk, Oflag IIC Woldenberg in Dobiegiew, the Wehrmacht prison in Anklam and the satellite camp of the Theresienstadt ghetto in Wulkow.

Places such as Klessin, Kienitz, Kostrzyn nad Odrą, Santok and Seelow also represent severe destruction and heavy losses in connection with the last major Soviet offensive towards Berlin. Nazi Germany finally surrendered on 8 May 1945 in Berlin-Karlshorst.

The **Oder-Warta 1945 history trail** recalls the events of that time and offers exciting insights from different perspectives.

PROJECT PARTNERS

City of Seelow (Lead Partner)
Küstriner Straße 61, 15306 Seelow
www.seelow.de

Municipality Stońsk
ul. Sikorskiego 15, 66-436 Stońsk
www.slonsk.pl



„Remembrance connects“ the Oder-Warta region is a German-Polish network for cross-border educational and remembrance tourism. Under the leadership of the city of Seelow, the tourism brand of the same name connects around 180 places of remembrance on both sides of the border to create a multi-perspective landscape of remembrance. Discover the unique history of the Oder-Warta region.

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LIBERATION ROUTE EUROPE

European Cultural Route of Liberation 1944-45

Liberation Route Europe is a certified Cultural Route of the Council of Europe and a project of the LRE Foundation. The route connects people, places, and events to mark Europe's liberation from occupation during World War II and to reflect on the long-lasting consequences and history of the war through a multi-national, multi-perspective approach. With hundreds of sites and stories in ten European countries, the route links the main regions along the advance of the Allied Forces in 1943-1945.

Liberation
Route
Europe



www.liberationroute.com

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Travelling through the unique history of the German-Polish border region on the Oder and Warta rivers

History trail of the 1945 war events

SEELOW HEIGHTS MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM

Where the war was.

Station on the Liberation Route Europe



www.reembrance-connects.eu



SEELOW HEIGHTS MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM

Where the war was.

The Battle of the Seelow Heights was one of the last and largest battles of the Second World War on German soil. It took place from 16 to 19 April 1945 and marked the beginning of the Soviet attack on the German capital.



Soviet military technology on the forecourt of the memorial.
The Soviet war cemetery at the memorial site.



By mid-April 1945, the **Red Army** on the Oder had completed its preparations for the general attack on Berlin. The wet lowlands of the Oderbruch and the Seelow Heights, which rose up to 70 metres behind it, represented the last major natural barriers in front of Berlin. Supreme Commander Zhukov planned a massive attack to break through the German defences there. The German leadership hoped that a successful defence would split the anti-Hitler coalition. The Soviet side aimed to defeat the Wehrmacht once and for all and end the war.

The **battle** began with a massive barrage of Soviet artillery fire. It was one of the most intense bombardments of the war, but some of it rained down on positions that had been evacuated according to plan. While the night was still foggy, the Soviet ground troops opened the main attack and crashed into the deeply echeloned German positional system. On the second day of fighting, the Red Army succeeded in breaking through the positions on the Seelow Heights on both sides of the Seelow base and, on the fourth day, the third and final defence strip. On 20 April, their combat units reached the outskirts of Berlin.

The Soviet operational plan significantly shortened the ensuing battle for Berlin: at the same time as the breakthrough at the Seelow Heights, advancing Soviet troops from the south-east overflew the enemy, who were flooding back from the Oder line. This prevented them from retreating to the Berlin area and reorganising in an orderly fashion. The Wehrmacht surrendered on 8 May. The war in Europe came to an end.

Unable to accept the hopelessness of continued fighting, the Battle of the Seelow Heights illustrates the willingness of the Nazi state to throw all tangible human reserves against a vastly superior enemy in order to survive. At the same time, this raises the question of what kept the combatants on both sides willing to fight. Even today, combat equipment and human remains are still being recovered from the site. For history buffs, the region thus offers a moving insight into the final days of the Second World War.

In the **memorial**, visitors can experience a permanent exhibition with exhibits, maps and recorded eyewitness conversations that illustrate the dramatic course of the battles. The open-air site, which is always accessible, includes tank and gun emplacements as well as a **Soviet war cemetery** with a representative memorial. Guided tours and information boards offer in-depth insights into the historical events and the significance of the site.



Volkssturm and alarm units replenish the ranks in the spring of 1945.

Remains of a field fortification on the Seelow Heights.



Gedenkstätte und Museum Seelower Höhen
Küstriner Straße 28 a
15306 Seelow

+49 3346 597
info@seelowerhoeen.de
seelowerhoeen.de

