

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 Dobiegniew, 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.

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„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.

WWW.REMEMBRANCE-CONNECTS.EU

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.



www.liberationroute.com

www.lre-germany.org

IMPRINT

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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

MEMORIAL ENSEMBLE KIENITZ 1945

Tank memorial and first bridgehead on the Oder River

Station on the Liberation Route Europe



www.reembrance-connects.eu



MEMORIAL ENSEMBLE KIENITZ 1945

Tank memorial and first bridgehead on the Oder River

The small village of Kienitz symbolises the events of the final phase of the Second World War. On 31 January 1945, in the early hours of the morning, lightly armed advance units of the Red Army reached the Oder near Kienitz and formed a bridgehead to the west bank of the Oder at the ferry station and the harbour mill.



Memorial stele on the Oder dyke

View of Kienitz and the Oder River



On the Oder embankment near Kienitz, on the path to the former ferry landing stage, a metal stele symbolises the Red Army's transition to the western bank of the Oder.

In the centre of the village of Kienitz, there is a war memorial commemorating the First World War (1914-1918). World War I (1914-1918), there are two further memorials. A T-34 Soviet tank commemorates the fallen Soviet soldiers. A second memorial commemorates all victims of the 1939-1945 war.

In mid-January 1945, the Red Army crossed the former eastern border of the German Reich and marched rapidly towards the Oder.

In the early hours of 31 January 1945, lightly armed advance units of the Red Army reached the Oder near Kienitz and formed a bridgehead to the west bank of the Oder at the former ferry station and the harbour mill.

This event came as a complete surprise to the population. German troops were not stationed in the village. According to Wehrmacht reports, the Red Army was still believed to be far to the east. As a result, a bridgehead four kilometres wide and two kilometres deep was quickly established on the west bank. German units were hastily withdrawn from various combat sectors and marched to destroy the bridgehead again.

The civilian population now also felt the full force of the devastating effects of the war, which they had previously only known from newsreels or reports from people on holiday at the front.

On 1 February 1945, the Kienitz harbour was bombed by the German air force. Numerous refugees from the eastern provinces of the German Reich, who sought shelter on their barges up to the harbour tip, were killed by the attack of their own air force. The population of Kienitz fled eastwards, against the actual flow of refugees, in order to escape the impending heavy fighting.

The battles for the village of Kienitz lasted 76 days before the Red Army was finally able to take the village. The village was 80% destroyed. The last refugees returned to their hometown in June 1945.

The small town of Kienitz and the war it lived through embodies as a symbolic time capsule all the unimaginable suffering inflicted on people during the war: the destruction of the landscape, the houses, war dead on both sides, hunger, cold, death, flight, expulsion, illness, the tearing apart of families, the loss of loved ones, imprisonment, the destruction of lives and the gnawing uncertainty of what was to come after the end of the war.



Kienitz Tank Monument

Memorial to the victims of the war 1939-1945



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