

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 Słonsk, 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.

Liberation
Route
Europe



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

THEATRE OF WAR: KLESSIN CASTLE

Place of Remembrance and
Commemoration

Station on the Liberation Route Europe



www.reembrance-connects.eu



THEATRE OF WAR: KLESSIN CASTLE

Memorial and memorial site

Just 1 km south of Wuhden lies Klessin, today a district of Podelzig. The village of Klessin and the manor were completely destroyed in the spring of 1945. A natural memorial and remembrance site has been created on the grounds of the manor. In addition to the historical reappraisal, an interesting, scenic area has also been recultivated.



In the first days of February 1945, the Red Army overcame the frozen Oder between Küstrin and Lebus. This was followed by weeks of fierce fighting around the Reitweiner Sporn. The small villages of Wuhden and Klessin were heavily contested. Wuhden fell at the end of February.

The pressure from three sides on Klessin increased and led to the encirclement of the village by the Soviet army. On 24 March, there was a violent breakout by the German soldiers who were still able to walk, and Klessin finally fell into Soviet hands. Many soldiers on both sides were killed or wounded in the seven weeks of fighting. Around 62,000 shells were fired at the Klessin area. Nowhere else in Germany was there such fierce and prolonged fighting over a settlement area. The village and estate of Klessin were razed to the ground.

The population returning in May 1945 found unimaginable chaos. The earth was riddled with shells and criss-crossed by many trenches. The bodies of the fallen soldiers, decomposing in the fields and trenches, had to be buried.

80 years have passed since then. Until now, there was no memory of this dramatic event, of death and destruction. The site of the former estate was used as a rubbish dump in the GDR. In 2009, the Wuhdener Heimatverein e. V. acquired the site from the BVVG. Together with the Association for the Recovery of Fallen Soldiers in Eastern Europe (VBGO), a search for fallen soldiers from both armies has been conducted on the site since 2008. To date, around 250 German and Soviet soldiers have been recovered and buried. The ammunition recovery service and the German War Graves Commission accompanied the project for many years. At the same time, a concept was developed as to how the area could be designed as a place of remembrance and commemoration. The Wuhdener Heimatverein e.V. was supported by the VBGO, a planning office, several companies and many hard-working hands. The descendants of Otto von Albedyll, the owner of the manor, have also made generous donations to finance their own share.

It took around 15 years to build the „Klessin Castle Theatre of War“ memorial and remembrance site. It was officially opened on 5 May 2023. Since then, it has been open to the public and accessible to everyone. If you drive along Klessiner Straße in Podelzig, you can see the large portal of the castle, which was destroyed in the war and is made of Corten steel, from afar.

On the right, a large steel plaque with laser-engraved lettering welcomes visitors. Opposite is the car park for buses and cars. To the left and right of the paved circular path, plaques and acoustic columns provide information about Klessin's history and the battle of 1945. Metal sculptures were made from the war scrap. The members of the Wuhdener Heimatverein e.V. maintain the area on a voluntary basis together with other helpers.



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