

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.

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.

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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.



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

THE FORMER NETZE LINE IN SANTOK

Stone witnesses to the end of the war in 1945

Station on the Liberation Route Europe



www.reembrance-connects.eu



THE FORMER NETZE LINE IN SANTOK

Stone witnesses to the end of the war in 1945

The ruins of the former Netze position in Santok are silent witnesses to the dramatic upheavals in Europe in 1945. They are a powerful reminder of war, flight and new beginnings – and of how fragile peace and freedom in Europe can be.



Former Netze line in Santok – view of fortifications

Regelbau B1/5a bunker – information board



Where today the Netze (Noteć) flows into the Warta, there was a focal point of world history in January 1945. The ruins of the Netze position in Santok are not only military remnants, but also a warning testimony to the end of the Second World War and the profound upheavals in Europe.

The end of the 'house of cards'

On 12 January 1945, the Soviet 'Vistula-Oder Offensive' marked the beginning of another decisive advance towards Berlin. The German Wehrmacht, which faced a superior force of 2.2 million Red Army soldiers with around 450,000 soldiers, attempted to halt the advance at fortified lines such as the Pomeranian Wall and the Oder-Warta Line.

Santok served as a strategic bridgehead at the confluence of the Netze and Warta rivers. Massive concrete bunkers were built to secure the river crossings. However, the Soviet troops used their enormous mobility to bypass the fixed positions or destroy them with direct fire from modern artillery.

At the end of January 1945, Santok fell, along with a number of other defensive positions. As German General Guderian had predicted, the German eastern front collapsed like a 'house of cards'.

Santok thus marks a stage in the 'path to liberation' from Nazi tyranny. A path that also liberated extermination camps such as Auschwitz and revealed the cruelty and horror of Nazi rule to the world.

At the same time, the military turning point was accompanied by great human suffering: millions of German civilians fled to the west. The subsequent 'westward shift of Poland' led to an almost complete population exchange. Large parts of the network of positions were destroyed after the end of the war by pioneers of the Polish People's Army.

A memorial for Europe

Today, the bunker ruins in Santok have been included in Polish monument registers as a memorial to the war. They invite visitors to reflect on shared European history, for example along the fortification trail (Szlak). Discover almost completely preserved structures such as the Object 19 all-round defense bunker or the enormous concrete blocks of blown-up fortifications.

Visit Santok and learn about history at the scene of the action – as part of a route that reminds us how precious peace and freedom are in Europe.



B1/5a bunker in Santok

B1/1a bunker in Santok



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