

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 Słońsk, 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

MARTYRDOM MUSEUM IN SŁOŃSK

Former penitentiary
and concentration camp
Sonnenburg

Station on the Liberation Route Europe



www.reembrance-connects.eu



MARTYRIUMSMUSEUM IN SŁOŃSK

Former penitentiary and concentration camp Sonnenburg

Słońsk, the former Sonnenburg, is a place with a tragic past. Between 1933 and 1934, it was the site of the first German concentration camp and later a prison. To this day, the full list of people imprisoned and murdered in Sonnenburg is unknown.



One of the most painful chapters in the history of Słońsk (Sonnenburg until 1945) was its time as a prison and concentration camp. During the Weimar Republic, Sonnenburg Prison served as a penitentiary for many political activists. After Hitler's seizure of power, it became the first German concentration camp where opponents of the Nazi regime were brutally repressed.

The prisoners were psychologically and physically abused and the place soon became known as „torture hell“. One of the most famous prisoners was Carl von Ossietzky, a German journalist, Nobel Peace Prize winner and opposition activist.

After operating as a concentration camp for more than a year, the facility became a prison again and was a place of execution and suffering for opponents of the Nazi regime for years to come.

The most tragic event took place in the night from 30 to 31 January 1945, when a detachment of SS men from Frankfurt/Oder carried out the mass execution of 819 prisoners of various nationalities. Among those murdered were representatives of many nationalities: French, Belgians, Germans, Dutch, Norwegians, Luxembourgers and others. The massacre began at around 10 pm and lasted all night. Ten people at a time were led out of their cells and shot between the prison wall and the workshop building.

In 1973, a small group of Słońsk residents decided to set up a museum and a memorial to commemorate the victims of Sonnenburg and warn against a repetition of this terrible history. The official inauguration of the Museum of Martyrdom took place on 28 September 1974.

The memory of the victims of these events is upheld not only through the operation of the museum, but also through the commemorative events organised by the municipality of Słońsk every year on the anniversary of the tragedy. Family members of prisoners, representatives of the authorities and delegations from Poland, Germany, Luxembourg and other countries whose citizens perished in Sonnenburg take part in the commemorative events.

The programme of commemorations includes events at the Martyrdom Museum and at the cemetery of the victims of imprisonment in the Sonnenburg concentration camp and prison, a mass and a meeting to develop a common historical culture of remembrance and European identity. These events are also an important element of German-Polish understanding and help to awaken interest in the history of the Second World War, especially among the younger generation.



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