

Garlitz

Im Schloss Garlitz, zwischen Neuhaus und Lübtheen in der mecklenburgischen Elbtalaue, hatte die SS vom 3. Februar 1945 bis 2. Mai 1945 prominente Häftlinge untergebracht. Das inhaftierte Prinzenpaar von Bourbon-Parma, Bruder und Schwägerin des Großherzogs von Luxemburg, wurde unter dem Tarnnamen „Biberpelz“ geführt. Außerdem waren hier – vermutlich als Hauspersonal – ein deutscher und ein tschechischer Zeuge Jehovas, eine dänische Familie und zwei junge Frauen aus der Sowjetunion inhaftiert. Das Lager wird im Bericht des SS-Standortarztes des KZ Neuengamme, Dr. Trzebinski, vom 29. März 1945 erwähnt. Die dänische Familie wurde vermutlich im Rahmen der „Aktion der Weißen Busse“ zur Rettung von KZ-Häftlingen nach Schweden evakuiert. Die anderen Häftlinge wurden durch US-amerikanische Truppen befreit.

Der Kommandoleiter, SS-Hauptsturmführer Joseph Sewera, soll die Häftlinge gut behandelt und ihnen Vergünstigungen gewährt haben.

**Das Gebäude des Außenlagers,
das ehemalige Schloss Garlitz, im
Jahr 2004.**

Foto: unbekannt. (ANg, 2010-2110)



Bisher einziges Dokument über das Lager in Garlitz: Aussage des Prinzenpaares von Bourbon-Parma am 19. September 1945 vor dem britischen Ermittler Oberstleutnant Gordon Browning in Brüssel. Gemeinsam mit ihren Kindern im September 1943 von der Gestapo als so genannte Austauschgeiseln in Frankreich verhaftet, waren sie ins „Prominentenlager“ des KZ Sachsenhausen und von dort am 3. Februar 1944 ins Neuengammer Außenlager Garlitz gekommen.

CIVIL AFFAIRS/G-5 DIVISION
MISSIONS (BELGIUM)

CA/G-5/582/2

Subject: Statement Prince of BOURBON-
PARME re concentration camp
of SCHLOSS-CARLITZ.

To: War Crimes Section
JAG Branch
HQ B.A.O.R.

1. Forwarded herewith is a statement made by the Prince and Princess of BOURBON-PARME in relation to their treatment at the concentration camp of SCHLOSS-CARLITZ MECKLEMBURG between 3 Feb 44 and 2 May 1945.
2. Prince Louis of BOURBON-PARME is a brother of the Prince of LUXEMBOURG and this statement was handed to British Military Mission LUXEMBOURG with the request that it be forwarded to the appropriate British Military authorities. An identical statement has been transmitted to Headquarters United States Forces European Theater.
3. The Prince and Princess state that they were well treated by their guards and in particular are convinced that they owe their lives to the refusal of Hauptsturmfuehrer JOSEPH SEWERA to carry out orders from HIMMLER for their execution. For this reason they ask that their statement may be taken into account in the event of any action being taken against SEWERA and his staff.

19 Sep 45.

24a, Boulevard du Regent,
Brussels.

GBS/thp

Gordon Browning
Gordon BROWNING, Lt. Col.
Head CA/G-5 MISSIONS BELGIUM.



We undersigned Prince and Princess Louis de Bourbon-Parme having good reasons to believe that we owe our lives to the S.S. Hauptsturmfuehrer(captain)Joseph SEWERA, while detained as hostages in Schloss Garlitz, Mecklenburg, want to make the following statement:

Arrested by the Gestapo and Feldgendarmerie on september 14 1943 in our home at Mandelieu(alpes-Maritimes), France, we were taken with our two children to a "Sonderhaus" of the concentration camp of Oranienburg near Berlin and brought then on february 3. 1944 to Schloss Garlitz, near Luebtheen, Kreis Hagenow, Mecklenburg where we were kept prisoners until liberated by the 9th U.S. Army on May 2d. 1945.

The S.S. Kommando in Garlitz consisted of a Hauptsturmfuehrer(captain), a Oberscharfuehrer(sergent-major), two Scharfuehrer (sergents) and eighteen men of which several were sent somewhere else later on. Most of these men were middle-aged, some in bad health and probably considered not "hard" enough for concentration camp duty; As a matter of fact we learned, after our liberation, from the wife of one of them, Heinrich SCHLUSSNUSS, herself a refugee from East-Prussia, that her husband had been for some time a warden in a concentration camp and had been transfered on his own demand. He had been unable to stand any longer the sight of the horrors there committed but was forbidden to say a word about it.

All of these had joined the S;S; at beginning or during the war; most seemed half-hearted nazies and only keen to get back to their home and families.

The Hauptsturmfuehrer Joseph SEWERA, a teacher, born 1905 in Winterberg, Boehmerwald, was a studious and mildtempered man. He did his best to soften the regulations imposed by the Gestapo. For example, he succeeded twice to have a priest say mass for us; he asked several times the Gestapo to let us correspond with our families though it was each time refused and he treated all of us internees with the same friendliness. With us were interned there a danish family, a german and a tcheque "Bibelforscherin" and two russian girls.

On the 23 or 24 of april 1945, as the Allied tropps were approaching, Sewera was called to the Gestapo of Schwerin. We knew that Himmler was or just had been there. Some days previously the Hauptsturmfuehrer had told us we would probably be taken to Denmark or Norway. He naturally knew we all hoped to stay on as the Allies were then on the Elb, 15 kilometers to the west.

He came back from Gestapo H.Q. looking very pale and nervous. and only told us: "We stay on here." We suspected he had orders to "liquidate" us as soon as the Allied troops crossed the Elb. The danish family was taken then to Denmark.

On the first of May the 9th. U.S. Army crossed the Elb near Neuhaus, 15 kilometres to the west of Garlitz; the Wehrmacht retreated and the S.S. left the same day. We regret to be unable, bound by our word, to say what captain SEWERA did then for us. We are positively certain Himmler had given orders to do away with all hostages.

The following S.S. were taken prisoners somewhere near Garlitz by the U.S. troops and brought doubtlessly to the prisoner camp of SUECKAU near NEUHAUS on the Elb;

S. men: accountant Franz CHVATAL (or CHVARTAL) born in Vienna 31-3-1899
 Leopold FALK, about 44 years, waiter, born Baden-Baden
 Robert HENNIGER, 38 years, gardener, born Prov. of Thuringen
 Hermann STECHER, about 40 years, eight children, farmer Sleswig-Holst.
 Heinrich SCHLUSSNUSS, about 45 years, farmer East-Prussia

The following S.S. might have been taken prisoners either by the U.S.
 or, further north, by the British troops:

Hauptsturmfuehrer Joseph SEWERA
 Oberscharfuehrer Friedrich SCHEFFLER, 42 years, farmer East-Prussia
 Scharfuehrer Heinrich MAHNKE, well over 50, a grandfather
 Scharfuehrer GUTJAHR, well over 50, a grandfather too, born Hannover
 more or less an invalid.

S.S. man Paul SCHUEMANN, about 40 years, farmer Mecklenburg
 " " Karl HAGEROTH, about 35 years, farmer, Goettingen
 " " Hans KRUEGER, 22 years, Berlin
 " " Joseph CONVENT, 38 years, farmer, suffering from tuberculosis

Wehrmacht :priv. Gerhard ELSNER, about 22 years, saddler, born in Dresden
 " " Rudolf FARNBACHER, 23 years, jeweller, born in Vienna
 " " Richard ADLER, about 35 years, chemist, born in Breslau
 " " Eduard FRIGGIN, about 35 years, tobacco-expert, Bremen

These last four men had been detached to the S.S. from the
 Luftwaffe after the German defeat in France. They hated the Nazi
 regime and were not pleased to have been detached to the S.S.
 They did not wear the S.S. uniform.

As we said before, all these men treated all of us internees kindly but we would particularly mention the accountant Franz CHVATAL (or CHVARTAL), a typically kindhearted Viennese, Leopold FALK, Robert HENNIGER and Hermann STECHER.

None of these S.S. men knew who we were except the captain and, possibly, the accountant; we were forbidden to mention our name under penalty of being taken back to camp and separated. We were given the name of Familie "BIBERPELZ" by the Gestapo, which didn't seem to have a very good taste in their choice of incognito names. As a matter of fact these incognitoes for hostages contained the principal letters of the real names. In our case B B P = Bourbon-Parme.

Our statement will probably appear rather surprising considering the horrors the S.S. Totenkopf perpetrated in all concentration camps. We can only think that in some small Kommandos like Garlitz where prisoners could not escape because their wife or their children were with them and who, as hostages, could be some day of value to the Nazis, the Gestapo put older and "softer" men in charge who could not be used in concentration camps or at the front. We felt like the welltreated prisoners of some cannibal tribe. At the end the frying-pan. Captain Sewera saved us from the frying-pan.

Luxembourg, 11th September 1945

Marie de Bourbon-Parme

Marie de Bourbon-Parme