

KONZENTRATIONSLAGER DACHAU

Dachau concentration camp, the first of the Nazi concentration camps opened in Germany, initially was intended to hold political prisoners. It was located on the grounds of an abandoned munitions factory northeast of the medieval town of Dachau, about 16 km northwest of Munich in the state of Bayern (Bavaria), in southern Germany.

Opened in 1933 by Heinrich Himmler, Reichsführer of the Schutzstaffel, (SS) its purpose was enlarged to include forced labour, and eventually, the imprisonment of Jews, homosexuals, Roma ("Gypsies"), ordinary German and Austrian criminals, and eventually a host of foreign nationals from countries that Germany occupied or invaded. The Dachau camp system grew to include nearly 100 sub-camps, which were mostly work camps or "Arbeitskommandos," and were located throughout southern Germany and Austria.

Prisoners lived in constant fear of brutal treatment and terror detention including standing cells, floggings, the so-called tree or pole hanging, and standing at attention for extremely long periods. There were 32,000 documented deaths at the camp, and thousands that went undocumented. Approximately 10,000 of then 30,000 prisoners were sick at the time of liberation.

The camps were liberated by U.S. forces on or about 29th April 1945.

Dachau Concentration Camp Cinderellas : on 1st November 1945, the Polish Red Cross issued two souvenir stamp sheets. The one sheet had six stamps with values in German currency. The stamps had various face values and were sold for R.M. 10 each in order to raise funds for the work of the Red Cross in the Dachau camps. The sheets were issued both perforated and imperforated.

The second souvenir sheet bearing a single stamp to the value of R.M. 3 was also produced by the Polish Red Cross and sold for R.M. 10. It too was issued both perforated and imperforated.

Neither sheet was accepted by the American authorities as being valid for postal purposes.