

**CULTYBRAGGAN CAMP, COMRIE © GR Wilkie 2009**



This is the view from the entrance of the former POW Labour camp at Cultybraggan, near the village of Comrie, Perthshire. This would originally have been the compound for the British guards, and the white building in the distance was the detention blocks, or solitary.

Cultybraggan camp was built in 1941, and was designed as a maximum security camp for 'Black' (die-hard) Nazis. It was split into five compounds according to the prisoner's branch of service, with an additional compound for officers. The camp gained a reputation for bullying and intimidation from these officers, and this culminated in the December 1944 murder of a prisoner wrongly suspected of being a British spy. Five Germans were tried and executed in 1945 for this murder, all 2000 officers were transferred to other camps in a single day, and the camp itself was disbanded in 1945.

Because it lies in 2000 acres of hills and moors, the army retained the camp post-war as a battalion-sized fieldcraft training centre for the Territorial Army (British Army reservists). In the 1970s, the western part of the camp, which included the buildings associated with the 1944 murder, were demolished and replaced by a firing range. The camp was downgraded to a company-sized facility at the same time.

Relinquished by the MoD in 2004, it now lies empty. A committee has been formed by citizens from the local village who exercised their right to buy part of the camp, and plans mooted include industrial units and perhaps a military museum. Timeshare properties will be built on other parts of the site.

The first five photographs are all of buildings in the British guards' compound.

The next two shots are of the camp chapel, which sits next to the main gate. It is one of many surviving original 16 foot span Nissen huts from WW2.







The top shot is of the dining room in the Officer's Mess, while the second one is of the lounge. A bar sits immediately behind the camera in the second photo. Those are original heating stoves in both photos.



This is the medical centre, built from a 24 foot span Nissen hut and sub-divided internally into many rooms.



This is one of the solitary cells in the detention block, which was latterly used as stores.



An original cell door.



This room was created out of three former cells, and their respective dimensions can be gauged from the marks on the walls.





The cell corridor. The wooden slats on the floor originally covered open gutters, but these have been converted into heating conduits. This room was originally used to put the inmates to work, and the marks where breeze blocks divided the floor into bays can just be made out.



The British Sergeant's Mess, originally outside the wire, but marking the end of the guard's compound.





And the German compound proper.





This is the interior of one of the German accommodation blocks. Prisoners would have slept in bunk beds.





The men's latrines, hardly changed since wartime



This section of the German compound has been scheduled by Historic Scotland as it retains the Nissen hut's original layout of groups of three huts in a cluster. This has to be unique in Britain.



No scheduling was deemed necessary for this side though. Originally, a wire fence separating two prisoner's compounds ran straight through the centre of the second picture.