

Captive Audience: Camp Entertainment and British Prisoners-of-war in German Captivity, 1939-1945.

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Captive Audience: Camp Entertainment and British Prisoners-of-war in German Captivity, 1939-1945

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Abstract

During the Second World War nearly 200,000 British prisoners of war were held inside the Third Reich. Most of the published narratives and histories focus on their road to captivity and attempts at escape but have often underplayed the importance of activities inside the POW camps, organised by the men themselves to alleviate the drudgery and boredom of everyday life. These included education and sports, but perhaps the most prominent aspect of this was the production of theatrical and musical entertainments – often in the most inhospitable circumstances. This study looks at the extent of such activities and their importance in day-to-day existence, both for officers and ordinary servicemen as they battled with the realities of long-term incarceration.

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