



Another verse
Bruce Orr has traded in his advertising executive pinstripes to bring music to Texas students. 2E



Fate takes a second hand

Gene Herndon was a colorful local character who ran pawnshops, loved golf and had a gambler's taste for flashy jewelry. His most prized possession was his Rolex President watch, a two-color custom job with a walnut dial and a platinum stripe around the yellow-gold wristband. His son thought it was lost forever. And then his wife got a surprise ...
Our Town, 2E

INSIDE

Know Jacksonville?

Test your trivia skills in a quiz on this year's Super Bowl host. 3E

Table talk

Readers share experiences — good and bad — from the fifth annual Dallas Dinner Table. James Ragland's Building Bridges, 6E



Legends of the range

Bob Moorhouse looks every inch the cowboy. But he packs a digital camera instead of a six-shooter. 4E

It got better

When a first date involves this many police and even an arrest, how could things get worse?
True Romance, 6E

ELSEWHERE



Unspoiled

Visit five fascinating Indian Ocean sites that were undamaged by the tsunami. Travel

COMING UP

SUNDAY

Roger remembers
Former Dallas Cowboys quarterback Roger Staubach talks about winning, losing, business and more. High Profile

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Prisoner of war Walter Werner painted this watercolor in August 1944, showing Camp Hearne in Texas, which housed up to 5,000 German POWs.

Hidden History

An overgrown field hides the ruins of a World War II POW camp, but a scholar is revealing its secrets

By **BRYAN WOOLLEY**
Staff Writer

HEARNE, Texas — Scrub trees and brush intermingle. Weeds grow waist-high, full of insects. Poison oak lurks everywhere in this thicket. Irises aren't expected.

Their long, blade-like leaves, bright and translucent in the autumn sun, rise bravely through dried leaves and trash that cover the neglected earth. Dozens of irises, perhaps 100, are growing as if in a garden. So far, only leaves are showing. No blooms yet.

"The prisoners would go out to work, and the farmers' wives would give them bulbs," Michael Waters says. "The prisoners would come back and plant them here."

"They'll be white," Cathy Lazarus says. "People used to call them 'cemetery irises.'"
Dr. Waters, professor of anthropology and geography at Texas A&M University, is also an archaeologist. Ms. Lazarus and her husband, both pharmacists, own the drugstore in Hearne, a farm town of about 5,000 in Robertson County, northwest of College Station. She's also the head of Roll Call — Friends of Camp Hearne, an organization of local volunteers who hope to preserve something of this forsaken site and recover its history.

Dr. Waters and Ms. Lazarus are standing near a concrete slab, about 20-by-100 feet, that 60 years ago was the floor of a mili-



German POWs work in the camp post office, directing mail to other POW camps. Only the enlisted men had to work.

tary barracks. The irises grew outside the door. The door is gone, the building is gone, and the irises remain.

The gardeners were soldiers of Gen. Erwin Rommel's famous Afrika Korps, tank warriors captured by British troops in North Africa and shipped to Texas to spend the rest of World War II behind barbed wire.

About 425,000 Axis prisoners of war, 371,000 of them German, were sent to camps in the United States during the war. Nearly 50,000 of them lived and worked at 70 camps scattered across Texas. Camp Hearne was among the earliest and largest of these. At its peak in late 1943, it

held nearly 5,000 prisoners, plus the American military personnel and 3,500 civilians lived in the town.

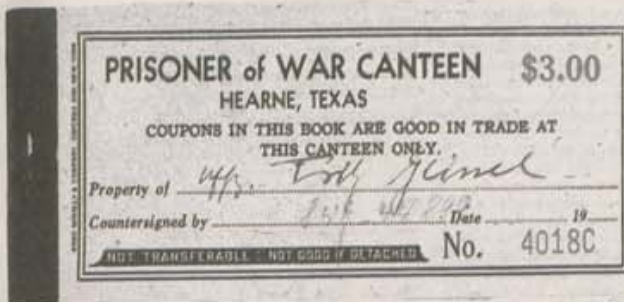
"There were more prisoners and guards than actual residents of Hearne," Ms. Lazarus says. "But Hearne had a real active chamber of commerce guy who did all the letter-writing to get the camp established. We couldn't bring in any war industry because there were no men left here. He felt that to bring a prisoner of war camp here would add to the economy, which it did."

Last summer, Dr. Waters pub-

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Hearne civic boosters hope someday to have a museum to display items such as this German Army Eagle.



A booklet of coupons used to purchase items at the camp canteen, and a one-cent coupon at right.



A German Infantry Assault Badge is among items found at the camp site.

The trial celebrity of Kato Kaelin takes a Dallas turn

Get fresh sheets on the pull-out sofa, Kato Kaelin is in the house. The Chauncey Gardner of Brentwood and the only O.J. trial participant to emerge almost unscathed is headed to Dallas.

Kato is the new host of the courtroom show *Eye for an Eye*, and it tapes right here. In his wildest nightmares, Marshall McLuhan never imagined the medium delivering a message this Darwinian, but here is the premise: Former South Carolina state prosecutor Akim Anastopoulos presides as Judge Extreme Akim, handing out hard-core justice. Did your friend wreck your car



ALAN PEPPARD
and refuse to pay the damages? Extreme might issue a baseball bat and let you go postal on your friend's vehicle.

Former middleweight boxer Sugar Ray Phillips keeps rowdies in line as the bailiff. The whole circus is produced by National Lampoon Inc. and Atlas Worldwide Syndications & Distribu-

tions. Starting Thursday, the show will tape from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the MPS Studios on Regal Row.

But why tape in Dallas? Executive producer Jerry Bryant lives here, while Kato is a Los Angeles. Extreme Akim lives in the Carolinas. Dallas is the midway point. As for Kato's accommodations, he'll actually be doing better than the sofa. He'll luxuriate at the Hotel Crescent Court through April.

Now that's Italia

What attracted all the big names to last week's opening of proprietor Scott Jones and chef Tom Slatt's new Cafe Italia loca-

tion in Plano's Lakeside Village? It might have something to do with the connections of investors such as former Greater Dallas Chamber of Commerce president Forrest Smith and his wife, Martha, and former ClubCorp president Jim Maser and his wife, Cindy.

Among those who turned out for the opening festivities were former First Baptist Church of Dallas pastor O.S. Hawkins, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas president Pat Hemingway Hall, Canadian consul general Jean-Michel Roy, III Forks steakhouse founder Dale Wamstad, Tuesday Morning CEO Kathleen Mason

and her husband, Charles, and state Rep. Burt Solomons.

Price of Euro hash

Esquire food columnist and my pal John Mariani writes in his newsletter that the weak dollar is having the effect you might expect on fine dining in Paris. "There is no way you can have a Michelin three-star meal without spending at least \$150 per person," John writes. "And it goes way up from there, with some appetizers costing \$75 and main courses often above \$100."

That's when I go to McDonald's and order the Vincent Vega special — a Royale with cheese.

Recently unearthed POW camp was once a hive of activity

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lished a book about this place. It's titled *Lone Star Stalag: German Prisoners of War at Camp Hearne* (Texas A&M University Press; \$29.95). His book is one of few in the vast literature on World War II that focus on the lives of prisoners of war, and may be the only detailed study of a single U.S. POW camp.

"Texas was a logical place to put POWs," Dr. Waters says. "Under the Geneva Conventions, POW labor could be put to work only in non-war-related industries. In Texas, that meant agriculture and lumber. All the young Texas guys had gone off to war. The prisoners filled the labor shortage created by the draft."

Only remnants

In the early 1990s, Dr. Waters heard of the camp's existence and drove to Hearne to poke around. "So much vegetation had grown up that I could be standing next to or literally on a foundation and wouldn't even know it," he says. Then he began to find diminishing remains of barracks, mess halls, latrines hidden in the undergrowth. "I saw the remnants of fountains the POWs had built," he says, "and mounds with little bits of concrete castle on top. They were decorative things the prisoners built to make their surroundings more pleasant and remind them of home."

Dr. Waters' work ordinarily deals with early humans and other prehistoric creatures. But he convinced the head of the A&M geography department that he should teach a course in "field methods in historical geography." He drove his students to Camp Hearne and put them to work to find and rescue as much of the place as they could.

Dr. Waters says the students were surprised that "field methods in historical geography" entailed bending on knees, digging and hauling. "Some said, 'Boy, this is hard work. It's not like an Indiana Jones movie where you walk around and pick up cool stuff off the ground.'"

Dr. Waters and his students uncovered many concrete foundations and about 1,400 artifacts, most of them mundane articles used in the ordinary routines of the prisoners and soldiers who lived in the camp. Toothbrushes and toothpaste tubes, shaving brushes and razors, belt buckles and buttons, military insignia and medals, German and American dog tags, mess kits, canteens and the like. They're now in an archaeological archive kept in Dr. Waters' A&M office.

"I've had more fun with this project than any other in my career," he says. "It never ends. Once or twice a week, I get an e-mail message or a letter from a son or daughter of somebody who was a prisoner here. They want information."

During the years since the excavation, the brush and weeds have reclaimed the prison site. The concrete slabs that are the only evidence of the camp's existence are hidden again.

But Roll Call — the group Ms. Lazarus founded — and the Hearne Chamber of Commerce hope Dr. Waters' collection someday will be on display in the town, in a museum that will attract tourists, and that yards and streets of the prison site can be cleaned up to become a walk-through historical park.

'Fritz Ritz'

The city of Hearne bought the site from the U.S. government after World War II. Because of shortages of lumber, plumbing fixtures and other construction materials after the war, all the buildings were sold and moved from the site. Now the camp's 290 acres are called Hearne Industrial Park, although only one small business has ever settled there.

"All American POW camps were run about the same," says Dr. Waters. "They wanted to adhere strictly to the Geneva Conventions, so the prisoners had a pretty good life. They were fed well and treated well. Only enlisted men had to work."

Under the Geneva Conventions, prisoners of war were to receive the same quality of food and clothing as the soldiers who were guarding them. American soldiers had more and better food — including such rationed items as sugar — than the civilians. Some locals, Dr. Waters says, resented that the enemy prisoners were eating better than they were, and called Camp Hearne the "Fritz Ritz."

The prisoners were through with the war, and they were safe.



BETSY BOCK/Staff Artist

Some said being a POW was the best thing that ever happened to them.

"Life was better for them than it had been in Germany even before the war," says Dr. Waters. "They had ambivalent feelings, of course, because their families were back in Germany and communications with them were slow."

"The United States was determined to comply strictly with the Geneva Conventions, because they knew that if word got out that German POWs in Germany were being mistreated, American POWs in Germany probably would suffer for it."

"But American prisoners in Germany weren't treated as well as German POWs here. There were more severe punishments for escapes. They weren't fed as well in German camps, but that had a lot to do with the food supply. The Germans themselves weren't getting much food."

Secret lives

Many prisoners left Camp Hearne every morning to work on nearby farms or at restaurants and a few other businesses in the town. But most stayed inside the camp, cleaning, cooking and building. School classes were available in



JOHN C. LIVAS/Special Contributor

Archaeologist Michael Waters, a professor of anthropology and geography at Texas A&M University, is the author of *Lone Star Stalag*.

many subjects. The prisoners developed their own orchestras, theater companies and athletic teams that performed for their fellow POWs, for townspeople and visiting military brass.

The American guards sometimes were too relaxed and didn't pay attention to what was happening among the prisoners, especially at night, when the POW barracks were unguarded. On those occasions, Camp Hearne became a turnabout to the old TV comedy *Hogan's Heroes*, in which wily American and British prisoners regularly pulled the wool over the

eyes of their stupid German keepers, Sgt. Schultz and Col. Klink. At Camp Hearne, the wily ones often were the Germans, and the unwary buffoons were the Americans.

German inmates found ways to convert 80 percent of the ordinary AM radios in the camp into short-wave radios so they could listen to German broadcasts of the war news — a more optimistic and inaccurate version than American networks were airing.

The prisoners dug secret rooms under the barracks floors, hung Nazi flags in them and held meetings there. They tunneled under

the barbed-wire fences and made short-lived escapes. They hung a Nazi flag from the camp water tower and laughed at the Americans trying to remove it.

"The Americans were just oblivious," says Dr. Waters. "When they did crack down, they found enough electronic parts in the barracks to build two broadcasting stations. And it was all out in the open. One guy had a pistol he had smuggled into the camp in his canteen. He could take apart the two halves of the canteen and remove the gun. He cleaned it every evening and put it back in the canteen, which al-



Camp Hearne Archive/Texas A&M

The German POWs built decorative fountains "to make their surroundings more pleasant and remind them of home," Dr. Waters says. This fountain, dubbed "Castle Schwanstein," was behind the lavatory in Compound Two at Camp Hearne.



Camp Hearne Archive/Texas A&M

Dr. Waters found the remnants of the castle fountain during his research. "The round white ring is the concrete that formed the moat."

Resources

For more information about Camp Hearne, visit Dr. Waters' Web site, <http://nautarch.tam.u.edu/anfh/waters/>

ways hung on his wall in full view."

Sinister power

The guards also were unaware of a conflict smoldering among the prisoners. Most of the POWs were ordinary citizens who had been drafted into the German army. Many despised Hitler and the Nazi Party and wouldn't be sorry to see them lose the war. Other prisoners were dedicated Nazis who formed themselves into a miniature army of thugs to enforce discipline and exercise control over the prisoners who didn't toe the Nazi line.

The Nazis even published a camp newspaper called *The Warning*. Its message was a threat: "Don't forget who you are. You're a German soldier and you'd better act like one." Under the noses of the guards, they harassed and beat anti-Nazi prisoners, and even murdered one.

Cpl. Hugo Kraus was an American of German parentage who had returned to the home country for a visit and, while there, was conscripted into the army. He spoke openly against Hitler at Camp Hearne and expressed hope that America would win the war. The Nazi thugs, suspecting he was a spy for the guards, beat him to death one night in the barracks. The other prisoners pretended not to notice.

"He was buried at Camp Hearne," Dr. Waters says. "After the war, the bodies of prisoners were disinterred. If the family back in Europe requested a prisoner's remains, they were sent there. Nobody ever claimed Kraus' body. He was reburied in the national cemetery at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio. A lot of POWs are buried there."

The escape

There was only one serious attempt to escape Camp Hearne. The fugitives were recaptured a few hours later, shivering in the Brazos River bottom. Other attempts, says Dr. Waters, were more for sport.

"They just wanted to get out for a while and walk around and see the countryside before they got caught. One guy was caught because he was marching down the road singing German marching songs. He didn't care. He was ready to get picked up."

Punishments for escape were mild, usually a few days in the stockade.

A few years ago, a vanload of former POWs came from Germany to reminisce and relive their days as prisoners at Camp Hearne. Their van wore a banner that read: "A Sentimental Journey." At the site of the camp, they laughed and swapped yarns with two former guards who had joined them for the reunion.

"One of the former guards became friends with one of the former POWs," Dr. Waters says. "The German's grandchildren came over one summer and spent two weeks in Ohio, and the Americans went from Ohio to Germany for two weeks and stayed with the family of the POW."

Dr. Waters interviewed the former prisoners about their experiences at Hearne, and corresponded with several others in Germany, including a few who kept journals or wrote memoirs of their POW years.

One of them, Willi Nellesen, wrote the foreword to *Lone Star Stalag*.

"I am grateful both to God and the Americans who stood guard at Camp Hearne during those terrible last two years of the war," he says. "Our captors minded the rules as long as the war lasted and we were impressed with the tolerance shown by the American officers, guards and farmers. It all was somewhat unusual for us."

Ms. Lazarus, who hopes the few remaining pieces of Camp Hearne will someday be a park, believes that's the important part of the story.

"We honored the Geneva Conventions. We treated our prisoners the same way we treated our soldiers. There was no differentiation, except that the prisoners were removed from the fighting. It was humane treatment."

"And I think we were one of the few countries that really, really tried to do that. We honored our commitment. And that's important to know."

E-mail bwoolley@dallasnews.com