

Camp Hearne, WWII Prisoner of War Camp

Official Texas Historic Site - Hearne, Texas

Purpose:

The purpose of *Camp Hearne (State/National) Historic Site* shall be the identification, **protection**, preservation and interpretation of the history of Camp Hearne, WWII Prisoner of War Camp, its archeological sites and its bearing on the wartime participation of servicemen and citizens in the United States.

Significance:

- **Camp Hearne** is the best remaining example of the U.S. Army's prisoner of war main camp because of the extent of the surviving ruins.
- **Camp Hearne** provides an excellent opportunity for the understanding and appreciating the important role played by our servicemen and local residents to the home-front war efforts.
- **Camp Hearne** provided housing for over 5000 German, Italian and Japanese prisoners with treatment exemplary of the Geneva Convention guidelines.
- The landscape of **Camp Hearne** has undergone little change since prisoners were repatriated in 1946 and the historic integrity and character of the campsite has been minimally altered.
- **Camp Hearne** was one of only 521 camps in United States.
- **Camp Hearne** was site of the brutal beating of a prisoner "American sympathizer" by a Nazi controlled group of prisoners.
- **Camp Hearne** provided central mail screening and distribution services for all prisoners of war within the United States that subsequently became an opportunity for Nazi infiltration and used to subjugate other inmates and/or the families in Germany.

Mission Goals

Resource Management

- Base decisions for preservation/ stabilization/ restoration/ reconstruction on carefully researched priorities derived from historic documentation, interpretive values, relative significance, integrity, condition, cultural landscape considerations, initial costs, and costs for ongoing maintenance.
- Manage the extensive museum collection, including historic artifacts and archives, to provide proper storage, protection and interpretation, utilizing the latest technology, interpretive exhibits, and up-to-date procedures.
- Minimize the effects on the historic scene by non-historic development both within and outside the boundary.
- Preserve/ restore/ reconstruct only that which is essential to interpreting the Camp's story. It has been determined that total restoration would not be practical or prudent nor is it essential to interpreting the history of the Camp.

Visitor Use and Interpretation

- Create an opportunity for visitors to understand the function and design of the Camp's construction as it relates to wartime rural America.
- Provide a balanced interpretive program that reflects the sociological and political diversity of all prisoners as well as contributions made by servicemen and residents to the home front war effort.
- Provide an interpretive program that reflects the day-to-day prisoner activities, both free time and as imposed by U.S. Army under Geneva Convention guidelines.
- Provide visitors interpretive program that includes period specific historical references that relate to military and civilian daily life during 1942-1946.
- Provide visitors full access to interpretive programs and historic structures without unreasonably compromising historic features.
- Revise museum exhibits to incorporate new research and technology.
- Continue to develop education programs to tell **Camp Hearne's** story.

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Constraints

- ADA requirements
- Restrooms
- Rest stops, benches
- Walking paths (wide enough for small trams for ADA)
- No public motorized vehicles allowed in restricted areas
- Recreational Vehicle designated area
- Maintenance
- Visitors Center/Museum
- Industrial Park ground assignments
- Airport access / approach restrictions