

LAMSDORF TOUR GROUP 2, 2018
GROUP TRIP TO ŁAMBINOWICE (LAMSDORF) POLAND
Stalag VIIIB/344 Lamsdorf



September 2018

Stalag VIIIB, later renumbered Stalag 344, was located near the small town of Lamsdorf (now called Łambinowice) in Silesia, Poland. More than 100,000 English-speaking POWs were held there, either at the base camp or in over 600 working parties in the area.

The Lamsdorf story is an incredible mixture of bravery, endurance, ingenuity and resourcefulness, as well as the triumph of the human spirit over adversity, sometimes in the most extreme conditions. This is a story that is as little known as it is amazing.

There are not many specialists on the subject of Stalag VIIIB/344, and this tour includes those who know more than most about this camp and the working parties: the staff at the Lamsdorf Museum, of course – this museum is said to be unique in the world for its research, record keeping, education and exhibitions about prisoners of war; Philip Baker, as operator of www.lamsdorf.com and other POW websites for 15 years or so, and leader of many Lamsdorf tours; Edward Haduch who knows more than anyone about the POW experience at Blechhammer;

TOUR SUMMARY

Monday 10th September 2018 - Tuesday 11th September 2018

Coach transport from Krakow, Poland, to visit:

- **Krakow Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery**
- **The former POW working party sites and museum at Blechhammer (now Kędzierzyn-Koźle)**
 - **To Opole for 1 night's hotel accommodation**
 - **The site of Stalag VIIIB/344 at Lamsdorf (now Łambinowice)**
- **A tour of the Polish Central Prisoner of War Museum, and the site of the camp, at Łambinowice with an expert guide**
 - **Return transport to Krakow**
- **Coach travel in comfortable and safe air-conditioned vehicle**
- **The services of an experienced Tour Leader throughout**

You will need to pay directly for your:

flights, hotel accommodation and meals, museum tour, gratuities, travel insurance; and to the tour leader for coach travel and his expenses.

For advice about booking flights, accommodation etc, see the relevant section below.

Next: TOUR DETAILS

TOUR DETAILS

Sunday 9th September 2018

Arrival in Krakow for 1-night stay

[I suggest we share a Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant.

Szara Kamierz Restaurant, Ul. Szeroka 39, Krakow is happy to welcome our group at 19.30 at a cost of £17.50 per person - £14.50 for vegetarian]

Monday 10th September 2018

09.00 depart Krakow Kazimierz District

09.30 arrive Commonwealth Cemetery (Rakowicki Cmentarz)

10.15 depart Commonwealth Cemetery

148 km

12.30 arrive Kędzierzyn-Koźle (Blechhammer)

Lunch at Restaurant Hugo, Kędzierzyn-Koźle £9.50 per person

Followed by:

14.00 Tour to include the sites of E3 Blechhammer and BAB 21 / E793 Blechhammer

15.00 Visit Stowarzyszenie Blechhamer Muzeum

16.00 Depart for Opole

56 km

17.15 arrive Opole: Hotel Mercure

Krakow



In the morning we visit the Commonwealth Cemetery where nearly 500 men who died whilst prisoners of war at Lamsdorf, are buried. Many died from illness whilst in the camp hospital, but others died in more tragic circumstances. We pay our respects to all these men and show that they are not forgotten. We then travel on to Blechhammer (now Kędzierzyn-Koźle). [I know a friendly restaurant there for our lunch – always used by my groups in the past.]

The Working Party Experience

There were so many Stalag VIIIB/344 Working Parties scattered over a very wide area around Lamsdorf that just one site has been chosen as representative of the Working Party experience. It is a very significant site though, having a huge number of POWs working there, and in probably the most dangerous conditions to be found anywhere.

Our guide is Edward Haduch who, with a colleague, founded the organization *Stowarzyszenia Blechhammer 1944*, which was created to commemorate the thousands of prisoners and forced labourers from around the world who were at Blechhammer during the war, and they also maintain a museum on this subject. Edward regularly guides tours and gives talks about Blechhammer and the events of that time. He will conduct a tour for us and we will visit his museum.

In Blechhammer (now named Kędzierzyn-Koźle) there were numerous working parties, notably E3, BAB 20, BAB 21 and E769, especially in chemical factories. Our guide will show us the sites and memorials commemorating these wartime events.

This area was the location of German chemical factories, prisoner-of-war camps, and other forced-labour camps. The factories used bituminous coal in a process to synthesize oil. The US Fifteenth Air Force dropped 7,082 tons of bombs on Blechhammer, with many deaths and injuries resulting amongst the POWs who worked there.

"In June 1942 we were transported to Blechhammer, in Upper Silesia. We were now at an oil refinery, which I believe was on the point of being completed. At this camp we were forced to unload anything that came daily by rail etc. Blechhammer employed about 50,000 slave workers. Forced labour from all over Europe: concentration camp Jews - Gypsies, political prisoners, convicted felons, German Army soldiers under punishment. We laboured in gravel pits, broke up brick rubble for road building within the training area and filled in shell holes on the artillery ranges. We were made to collect the heads of sunflowers grown on acres of land. During 1944 we were bombed from June and every month thereafter by the American Army Airforce. Tragically, we lost some of our mates. We were not allowed to go into the air raid shelters, which among other things we had been forced to build. The other nationalities there were also hard hit."

POW Eric Reeves



Stalag 344 Germany 7th December 1944

Dear Sirs,

It is with deep regret that I have to inform you that 30 British prisoners of war, details of whom are shown on the attached list, were killed during an air attack on Saturday 2nd December, 1944, at Working Party E/793 (formerly Bau u. Arbeits Batt.21) and Working Party E/3 Blechhammer, O/S.

Yours Sincerely,
S. Sherriff, R.S.M.
Camp Leader.

We will now travel on to the city of Opole for a one-night stay.

Tuesday 11th September 2018

09.00 depart Opole Hotel Mercure

40 km

09.45 arrive Polish Central POW Museum Łambinowice (Lamsdorf)

The Museum does not usually provide food for its visitors, but on this occasion they have offered to arrange lunch for the group at a cost of £12 per person, in the former German canteen which is opposite the Museum.

15.00 depart Łambinowice

200 km

17.30 Arrive Krakow Kazimierz District

Lamsdorf



Today is devoted to Lamsdorf itself. We will have an expert guide with us from the **Polish Central Prisoner of war Museum**, who is extremely knowledgeable about the Commonwealth POWs at Lamsdorf. This museum, on the site of Stalag VIII B / 344 Lamsdorf, is a unique institution in Europe. The Museum is involved in research and record-keeping, exhibitions and displays, publishes materials, runs conservation works, as well as activities of a commemorative nature, all related to prisoners of war of any nationality.



We visit the site of Stalag VIII B/344, beginning at the **railway halt** where most of the POWs were unloaded from cattle trucks.

If you wish you can walk the mile to the camp in the footsteps of the prisoners, or stay on the coach if you prefer. We see the original **POW cemetery** dating from the Franco Prussian War, where Commonwealth POWs were buried before being transferred to Krakow. The fascinating Museum itself is housed in the former German headquarters and gives an excellent, detailed presentation of the lives and experiences of the prisoners. An interesting programme will be prepared for you. You can spend as much time as you wish viewing the exhibits and our guide will be available to answer your questions. Although there are very few remains of the camp, the original road through the camp remains, and you will be able to see some of the **huts** that housed Russian prisoners, including one that has been restored inside to its 1940s condition. There are various **memorials** to be visited on the site. The Museum staff will do their best to give help and advice about your own researches, and they might well be glad of information you can give them to add to their knowledge base.



We now return to Krakow.

Next: MAKING YOUR TRAVEL AND HOTEL ARRANGEMENTS

ADVICE ON MAKING YOUR TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION ARRANGEMENTS

Information given below is correct as far as is known at the time of writing, but may be subject to change. Please check with the airlines, hotels etc for up-to-date details. The information given below is for guidance, but please check yourself to make sure whether it is still correct.

FLIGHTS

You need to arrive in Krakow* on or before Sunday 9th September 2018.
and fly from Krakow on or after Wednesday 12th September

*Krakow Balice Airport also known as John Paul II Airport

If you are travelling from UK, there are direct flights to Krakow* as follows:

Belfast International

East Midlands

London Gatwick

Birmingham

Edinburgh

London Stansted

Bournemouth

Leeds Bradford

Manchester

Bristol

Liverpool

*subject to change

- **Here are links for booking flights:** [Easyjet](#) [Ryanair](#)

If you are travelling from outside the UK, you might consider travelling to UK first, and you might well meet others taking this tour at the airport.

- If you need overnight accommodation at a UK airport, this link might be useful for you:
[UK Airport Hotels](#)

TRANSFERS FROM KRAKOW AIRPORT TO YOUR HOTELS

- Here are some links for booking transfers from Krakow Airport to your hotel:
[Krakow Shuttle](#) [Krakow Direct](#) [Krakowtaxi4U](#)

HOTEL IN KRAKOW

We recommend that all group members stay in **Kraków's Kazimierz District**, which is the historic, former Jewish Quarter. We will then all be close together. The hotels there are pleasant, typically Polish, and mostly cheaper than in the city centre. If you want to walk into the city centre it is not far. Hotels I know about there include: Hotel David, Kolory B&B (the cheapest, but very nice), Hotel Karmel, Hotel Regent, Hotel Secsja, Hotel Kazimierz. I am not specifically recommending any of these as my information on them is not up to date. You will be able to book with them on Booking.com or directly on-line. Booking.com might show limited availability as not all rooms are necessarily made available to them.

You need a minimum of **2 night's accommodation in Krakow:**
Sunday 9th September and Tuesday 11th September 2018

Here is a link for booking Krakow hotels in the Kazimierz District:

- Here is a link for booking Krakow hotels in the Kazimierz District:

[Krakow Kazimierz Hotels](#)

Next: OPOLE

HOTEL IN OPOLE

There are fewer hotels in Opole than in Krakow. I do recommend the **Hotel Mercure**, which has been used several times for Lamsdorf tour groups, and it has proved to be ideal. There are other suitable hotels too, of course. The Mercure is near the railway station, so if you are booking a different hotel, something in the same area would be best.

You need **1 night's accommodation in Opole:**
Monday 10th September 2018

- Here are two different links for booking the hotel in Opole. See which give you the best price:

[Opole Hotel](#)
[Hotel Mercure Opole](#)

WANT TO EXTEND YOUR TOUR?

Perhaps, being in Poland, there are other places you would like to visit.

**Tour of Krakow
Auschwitz
Tatra Mountains
Zakopane
The Wieliczka Salt Mine
Ojcow National Park
etc**

You can do this by arriving in Krakow a day or two before your tour begins, or by leaving a day or two after your tour finishes. Here are some links about the attractions of the Krakow area, and some tour companies that can make arrangements for you. You will also find that most hotels can make tour arrangements for you.

[Krakow Shuttle Tours](#) [Escape to Poland](#) [Point Travel](#)
[Krakow Info](#) [Trip Advisor](#) [Polish Forums – Tours Around Krakow](#)
[Krakow Welcome](#) [Lonely Planet](#)