



POW CAMPS IN THE UNITED STATES

VTS POWERPOINT GUIDE





Kentucky Academic Standards For Social Studies

High School

HS.UH.KH.1 Examine how Kentuckians influence and are influenced by major national developments in U.S. history from 1877-present.

HS.UH.CE.2 Analyze the events that caused the United States to emerge as a global power between 1890-1991.

HS.UH.CO.3 Analyze the role of the United States in global compromises and conflicts between 1890-1945 in the Spanish American War, World War I, the Interwar years and World War II.



POW Camps in the United States Historical Overview

Col. George M. Chescheir Sr. of Louisville, Kentucky, enlisted in the 1st Kentucky Infantry, National Guard, in 1911 and became an agent for New England Mutual Life Insurance Co. in 1922. He took part in the Mexican border skirmish of 1916-1917, first as a 1st lieutenant and then as a captain commanding a machine-gun company. In World War I, he commanded Battery F of the 138th Field Artillery in France (1917-1918) and was discharged in 1919.

After the war, the National Guard was reorganized, and Chescheir rose from major in the 1st Battalion to lieutenant colonel and executive officer of the 138th Field Artillery. At the start of World War II, he was promoted to colonel of the 138th. When Guard units were attached to regular army divisions, he became commanding officer of the prisoner-of-war camps in the Southeast (Georgia, Alabama, and Florida), with headquarters at Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia. Ft. Benning emphasized humane treatment of prisoners, most of whom were Italian or German. A reeducation program had POWs study English, American government, and history, and camp staff took Italian courses to communicate with them.

Soon after WWII was over, Col. Chescheir retired from his military command and returned to Louisville, Ky. After he retired from active duty, Chescheir remained active in state and national military affairs and served as a civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army.



What's in the picture? Photograph Analysis

Photograph #1: Colonel Chescheir (R) standing with Chaplain Roderick MacEachen (L) at the headquarters of the prisoner of war camp at Fort Benning, GA. The two German prisoners in the Jeep wear the uniform of the Afrika Korps, which arrived at Fort Benning in the summer of 1944. Chaplain MacEachen served with these two men, a Catholic and a Lutheran clergyman, who acted as his assistants.



Photograph #2: Colonel Chescheir (R) with Erich Hage (L), showing a map of the thirteen camps under Chescheir's command in Georgia. The thirteen branch camps participated in the re-education program for German prisoners of war in American democracy.



Photograph #3: Fort Benning Prisoner of War staff. L-R Standing—Lieutenant Schmitt, Warrant Officer Jones, Lieutenant Piekel, Captain Raleigh, Captain Daley, Lieutenant Maloney, Captain Smook, Lieutenant Fedenza. L-R Seated—Captain MacEachen, Lieutenant Colonel Johnson, Colonel Chescheir, Captain M.J. Camp, Captain Sanfillippo.



Photograph #4: Prisoners of war sewing, mending, and fitting clothing. One man in the foreground appears to be sewing on a Singer sewing machine. Two other men appear in the background one man is getting fit for a jacket.



Photograph #5: Prisoners of war preparing a meal. Four men are in the foreground and appear to be standing over stoves with soup bowls on the right and chicken on the left.



Photograph #6: Three Italian prisoners of war at Fort Benning presenting a cake to the captain of the 176th Infantry Regiment soccer team, Lieutenant Al Leckie (L). Giuseppe Meazza (R) is shaking hands with Lieutenant Leckie. Meazza was captain of the Italian World Cup and Olympic soccer teams prior to the war and after the war coached various teams.



Photograph #7: 176th Infantry Regiment soccer team.



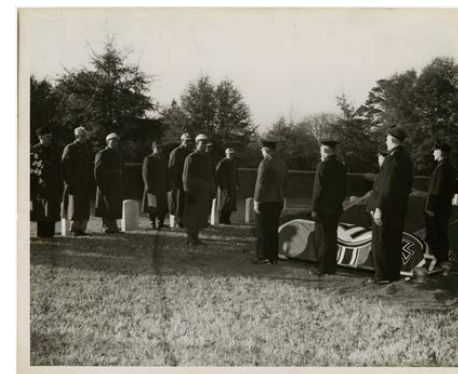
Photograph #8: Soccer game in progress. Photograph shows the stadium with seating in the background. Several men appear in the foreground playing soccer, while a group of men is in the background sitting on the bleachers.



Photograph #9: A prisoner of war working as a cobbler, repairing shoes. There are several boxes and shoes surrounding him while he nails one shoe in his lap.



Photograph #10: German prisoner of war funeral service. In a cemetery, men in uniform standing at attention. There is a coffin draped with the Nazi flag. Six men stand next to the coffin while a group of people stand on the opposing side. A man to the far left holds bouquet of flowers.



Photograph #11: Father Roderick MacEachen, a Catholic priest at Fort Benning, giving communion to a prisoner of war. "PW" can be seen on the back of the prisoners' shirts and pants as they kneel for communion.



Photograph #12: Church service outdoors. Prisoners of war are kneeling to receive communion. Father Roderick MacEachen, a Catholic priest at Fort Benning, is walking down rows of prisoners.



Photograph #13: Prisoner of war eating a turkey drumstick. Prisoner is wearing a bracelet and button up shirt. The tables are set with a plate, cup, fork, spoon, and knife.



Photograph #14: Prisoners of war musical band. The band includes, from left to right, three saxophones, two violins, and a piano in the foreground. In the background there are two guitars, a drum set, and a trumpet.



Photograph #15: Prisoners of war in art class. Several men in prisoner uniforms sit around a man and draw his face, while one man stands in suit and instructs.

