



POW CAMP MARRINUP TRAIL



0m | 200m | 400m



TYPE



Grade 2

DISTANCE



4.5kms circuit

TIME



2 hours

LEGEND

Unsealed track

Road

POW Trail

Starting point

Point of Interest

Remains

Parking

Dogs are prohibited

ENQUIRIES & INFORMATION

www.visitpeel.com.au

GETTING THERE

Drive from the Dwellingup History and Visitor Information Centre:

Turn left at the local hotel.

Turn right at the stop sign at McLarty St and follow Pinjarra-Williams Rd for 2.0km.

Turn right into Grey Rd, follow for 2.5km.

Veer right and cross the railway line.

Turn left into Grey Rd again, pass under the big power lines, veer right and continue for about 500m until you reach the car park.

Camp information is on a board.

TRAIL INFORMATION

Marrinup town was established in the 1880's to harvest Jarrah. When timber resources declined, operations moved to Dwellingup, with the remainder of the town destroyed by the 1961 bush fire.

Large Blackbutt trees can be seen growing in the fertile soil of the creek lines.

Wooden sleepers of the old tramway tracks, built for hauling Jarrah, can still be seen in places and a creaky bridge crosses the creek.

The entrance to the Prisoner of War Camp (POW) camp has information panels with photos of camp life in the 1940's.

In the Commanding Officer's area, prisoners built flower gardens marked out in gravel stones that are still visible.

Land around the camp was mined for Bauxite and has since been landscaped and replanted. Surrounding forest is native Jarrah and Redgum and mostly regrowth after the onslaught of the firewood cutters.

POINTS OF INTEREST

With a post-war labour shortage, a network of camps and control centres was built across Australia for POW's shipped from Libya and India to help the Australian workforce, particularly in rural areas.

WA had 1 POW camp and 30 Control Centres. Number 16 POW Compound and Garrison was built to provide farm labour and cut firewood for Perth. It was approximately 16ha in size and some of the foundations can still be seen.

The camp could accommodate 1200 men, including Army personnel and thousands of prisoners passed through its gates, mostly Italians or Germans with an average age of 30.

Many Italians were chosen for their rural working background and less troublesome nature, while some Germans were taken because of their skills as woodcutters.

The Camp was basically a transit stop for workers on the way to farms or rural control centres. Prisoners only stayed for long periods for medical or disciplinary reasons.

A strategically placed fence surrounded the compounds with triple concertina wire placed outside. Six watchtowers and powered floodlights encircled the area.

In the compound, huts had a wooden bed, mattress, blankets and a locker for each POW. Most of the buildings were constructed of material scrounged from disbanded internee camps and Army depots.

Buildings included sleeping huts, hospitals, latrines, hot and cold showers, wash houses, mess room, administrative office, a drying room for wet winter clothes and an education hut.

Gardening was a favourite occupation, and a fine example of their skills is a fishpond and garden beds in the shape of playing card suits and can still be seen adjacent to the powerhouse foundations.

Camp life followed a strict routine starting at 6am with work finishing at 3pm and lights out at 10pm. Prisoners were expected to work eight hours a day either inside or outside the camp.

The German woodcutters supplied Perth with firewood to fuel power generators, water pumping stations and industry. They supplied some 2,500 tonnes a week, half of Perth's annual requirement.

Prisoners were paid about one shilling and three pence a day in tokens to inhibit thoughts of escape. Tokens were used to buy chocolate, cigarettes and other items from a mobile army canteen.

Free time was spent painting, sketching and carving wooden items. Classes were taught in Maths, Spanish, English, Italian, Biology, Physics and Accountancy.

On Sundays prisoners were allowed out of the camp on parole walks and to play football matches and other sports.

When the war ended, the POW's were to be sent home but some wanted to stay in Australia to avoid returning to war-devastated Europe. While their employers supported them, they had to return home before they could apply to immigrate by sponsorship.

Thirty men escaped and remained in WA after the final shipload of POW's left Fremantle in December 1946.

CODE OF PRACTICE

- Be sure to read the trail information before you set out.
- Carry adequate food and water for your walk.
- Dress appropriately for the trail and weather conditions.
- Leave no trace. Take all of your rubbish home.
- Stay on the trail and avoid sensitive natural areas.
- Be courteous to other trail users.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Dwellingup History & Visitors Information Centre	9538 1108
Shire of Murray Rangers	9531 7777
Dwellingup Police Station	9538 1057



ANYTIME
ADVENTURES

Find out more about Mandurah and the Peel Region here www.visitpeel.com.au

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