



# The National Archives

**Improving access to WO 416:**  
German Index cards of British and  
Commonwealth Prisoners of War,  
Second World War

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# Background

- Series transferred from Ministry of Defence in December 2014
- 417 pieces (boxes) of German index cards relating to some 200,000 Allied Prisoners of War
- Bulk of series relate to British Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force personnel (Officers and men)
- Also include Merchant Navy Officers and Ratings, South African, Palestinian, New Zealand, Australian personnel, and other nationalities
- Series arranged by surname ranges
- Numbers of cards for each person range from 1 up to 7
- Series Doesn't include all ex-POWs

# What the cards contain

- Country of origin.
- Surname.
- First name/s.
- Place and Date of birth.
- Father's first name.
- Mother's maiden name.
- Name and Address of Next of Kin.
- Religion.
- Service (e.g. Army, Air, Navy).
- Service Rank/number.
- Camp name/number.
- Date and Place of Capture.
- Details of deaths by use of symbols such as blue and red crosses.
- Photographs
- X-rays
- Fingerprints

# Access history

- Series contains detailed personal information and 50% may relate to living people (i.e. people born less than 100 years ago)
- Currently series is Closed whilst access is reviewed
  - FOI Requests are made through the FOI Centre in line with other closed records
  - In agreement with MoD we can provide information if the individual was born more than 100 years ago (require proof of death if born after 1916)
  - DPA requests are also handled by the FOI Centre

# Issues identified



- Loose cards missing envelopes
- Cards unsecured/misfiled
- Some include x-rays
- Some cards in English; others in German
- Some cards are stapled together/others loose.

# Our plans to improve access

- Using FTNA Cataloguing volunteers we will:
  - Sort cards in each piece and ensure each case (item) has a secure envelope
  - Capture some personal information and create an item for each record (c. 200,000 items)
  - Open those records relating to known deceased individuals and those born more than 100 years ago (up to 50% of the collection).
  - Annual releases up to 2027
  - Consider death matching exercise with GRO (similar to 1939 Register)
  - Retract item descriptions for those who may still be alive (i.e. closed records)

# Catalogue descriptions

- Current
  - WO 416/20 Prisoners of War: Sidney BARNETT - Patrick BARRY
- Future – **Expanded open records** (to be discussed and agreed)
  - WO 416/20/1
    - Sergeant Sidney Richard Thomas Barnett, 5567818, Leicestershire Regiment
    - Born 27 August 1909, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire.
    - Camp Stalag XX A
    - Prisoner number 5151
    - Capture date 11 April 1940
    - Died 12 November 1942
    - Includes photograph

# Catalogue descriptions

- Future – **Retracted closed records** (to be discussed and agreed)
  - WO 416/20/1
    - Barnett, S R T. Year of birth 1919



# Examples of cards



Gefangenenlager: <i>Stalag IX A</i> <i>Bozen</i>	Staatsangehörigkeit: <i>England</i>	Nr. der Liste: <i>31</i>
Gefangenen-Nr.: <i>5751</i>		Seite der Liste:
Name: <i>Mc Donald</i>		Beruf:
Vornamen: <i>Hector William</i>		Religion:
		Dienstgrad: <i>Oberplumbeil</i>
Geburts- u. Geburtsort: <i>28. 6. 09</i> <i>Ferry Ireland</i>		Truppenteil: <i>Inf. 1/5th Linc. L. Coy</i>
Vorname des Vaters: <i>William</i>		Komp. ufm. Matr. Nr. <i>485 3364</i>
Familienname der Mutter: <i>O. Neal</i>		Ort und Tag der Gefangennahme oder Internierung: <i>Trotton New</i> <i>24. 4. 40</i>
Name u. Anschrift der zu benachrichtigenden Person: <i>Mrs. S. Mc Donald</i> <i>138 Coventry Rd</i> <i>Market Harbo o Leics</i>		Verwundungen, Verletzungen oder Tod: <i>Verwundet</i>
		wann und von wo zugezogen: <i>Am 28. 6. 40 von Stalag II D</i>
Aufenthalt u. Veränderungen: <i>9. 5. 40 v. Killebrannier nach Kriegsplatz, 11/599 Det. 10 74</i> <i>16. 5. 40 n. Gef. Lager</i> <i>19. 8. 42 v. Stalag XXI B nach Stalag XXI A. 1. 2. 481 502 Stalag XXI A</i> <i>19. 8. 42 v. " " " " XXI A. 1. " 580. 18 " " XX A</i> <i>16. 9. 42 v. " " " " XXI A. 2. 481 502 " " XXI A</i>		



# Some notable faces



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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**Personalkarte I: Personelle Angaben** *997*

Kriegsgefangenen-Stammlager : **Stalag Luft 3**

Bezeichnung der Erkennungsmarke

Nr. 522

Lager : Stalag Luft 2 (1)

Name : Butterworth  
 Vorname : Peter W.  
 Geburtstag und-ort : 4.2.15 Breshill/Chesh.  
 Religion : G.B.  
 Vorname des Vaters : William  
 Familienname der Mutter : Morgan

Staatsangehörigkeit : England  
 Dienstgrad : Lt(A) 216. R.H.  
 Truppenteil : R.H. Komp. usw. : 825 Squ.  
 Zivilberuf : B.S. Berufs-Gr. :  
*Berufssoldat*  
 Matrikel Nr. (Stammrolle des Heimatlandes) : keine  
 Gefangennahme (Ort und Datum) : Torval 21.6.40  
 Ob gesund, krank, verwundet eingeliefert : gesund

Des Kriegsgefangenen

Lichtbild



Nähere Personalbeschreibung

Größe	Haarfarbe
<u>1.69</u>	<u>d. blond</u>
Fingerabdruck des rechten/Erstlings	

Besondere Kennzeichen :  
sehr bläuel.gelbl. Teint

Name und Anschrift der zu benachrichtigenden Person in der Heimat des Kriegsgefangenen  
Mrs. W. S. Butterworth  
29 Princeps Street  
Ulverston

BUTTERWORTH, PW. 622