

Subject: Fort Hunt Interrogations

Hi Vic,

Sorry it took me so long to get back to you. Here is my summary of the interrogations of German naval personnel during World War II:

The National Park Service (NPS) has jurisdiction over Fort Hunt Park, a facility used during the World War II period by the U.S. Army and the U.S. Navy for the interrogation of German Prisoners of War. As a volunteer for the NPS from 2007 to 2013 under the guidance of Ranger Historians Brandon Bies and Vince Santucci, I searched files at the National Archives and prepared several tabulations. These have never been evaluated, verified or published anywhere but have been discussed with Naval Chief Historian Randy Balano.

In a cooperative effort, NPR reporter Karen Duffin and I prepared a list of the Navy personnel who served as interrogators at Fort Hunt. This is available as a spreadsheet (attached). Features which may be noted include the following:

- (a) It was common for Navy interrogators to use aliases when interrogating.
- (b) Use was made of both British (RNVR) and Canadian (RCN) Navy personnel
- (c) Several German POWs became stool pigeons (SP) for the U.S. and also performed interrogations
- (d) More than 1350 interrogations of (nearly 900) German naval personnel were conducted in the 1942-1945 time span, especially early in the war. (In addition, there were almost twice as many interrogations of German Army personnel).

See: <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/extras/behind-the-scenes-of-a-secret-interrogation-camp>

A second spreadsheet provides the names of the German POWs and the corresponding names of the Navy (in blue) and Army (in black) personnel who performed the interrogations. Features which may be noted:

- (a) Although not all U-boat personnel from captured U-boats were interrogated, practically every German crewman who was interrogated (nearly 900 out of 3,800) came to Fort Hunt.
- (b) In addition to U-boat personnel, a few other German boats, such as "Blockade Runners" were captured and crewmembers interrogated.
- (c) Important information was obtained by interrogations and by the capture of secret equipment such as the German Naval Enigma machine and the Enigma code. This is how Captain John L. Riheldaffer, the Naval officer in charge of the contingent at Fort Hunt, summarized the effort:
"The importance of interrogation as a means of producing intelligence concerning enemy activities has been emphasized by the successes accomplished with respect to German submarine warfare. Experimental developments in radar and counter-radar, and in new types of torpedoes have been first ascertained through interrogation of German personnel who were familiar with experiments or research on this project."
- (d) One notable U-boat capture was the U-505, and the disposition of the boat and its crew was not disclosed until many years after the event. Captain (later Rear Admiral) Dan Gallery and his Hunter Killer Group towed the sub to Bermuda where secret Navy interrogations took place before the crew was taken to a secluded section of Camp Ruston LA. To avoid boredom, the American guards taught the Germans how to play baseball, a story which is told in the 2006 book by John H. Moore, "Playing With the Enemy".

After ending my research for the NPS, my main interest has been to find out about the training of intelligence personnel at the Military Intelligence Training Center (MITC), commonly known as Camp Ritchie. A lot of the history of Camp Ritchie is known from the following:

"The Ritchie Boys" a documentary film (2004)

"Sons and Soldiers", a book by Bruce Henderson (2017)

"Camp Ritchie Declassified", a book in process by Beverley D. Eddy (2020?)

A Facebook page "The Ritchie Boys of World War II" <https://www.facebook.com/Ritchie-Boys-of-WWII-684490604906197/>

My website www.theritchieboys.com

Regards,

Dan Gross, a Ritchie Boy Wannabe