

VISITING THE CAMP SITES TODAY

After the war, camps were dismantled, so that little physical evidence remains today.

However, it is still well worth visiting the sites to gain an appreciation of what they were like.

Most of the camp sites are now on private property and in some cases owners or lessees need to be contacted before you enter. Tatura Historical Society can provide details of how to gain access.



The only German War Cemetery in Australia is located 3kms west of the Museum. The Italian Ossario is in Murchison (Vic) and the Japanese Cowra (NSW)



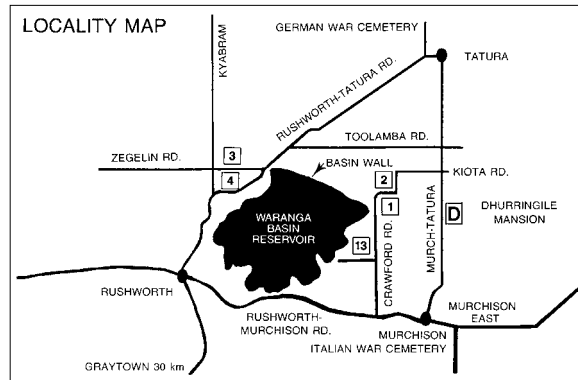
Former Tatura Railway Station.

The Museum houses objects, documents and photographs relating to the Pioneers of the district and development of Local Industries.

We have a great deal of material relating to Local History and the History of Irrigation in the Western Goulburn Valley.



Hogan Street, Tatura



Water Wheel

For further information please contact
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Museum open 2-4pm weekends & public holidays,
1-3pm weekdays

(or at other times by phoning one of above members)

Rodney Printers (03) 5824 2042

TATURA WORLD WAR II WARTIME CAMPS COLLECTION

The Museum also contains photographs, memorabilia, artefacts made in the camps, intelligence reports, records, newspaper articles and books relating to the seven Internment and Prisoner of War Camps in the Tatura area during World War II.



Tatura Irrigation & Wartime Camps Museum

Hogan Street, Tatura, Victoria 3616

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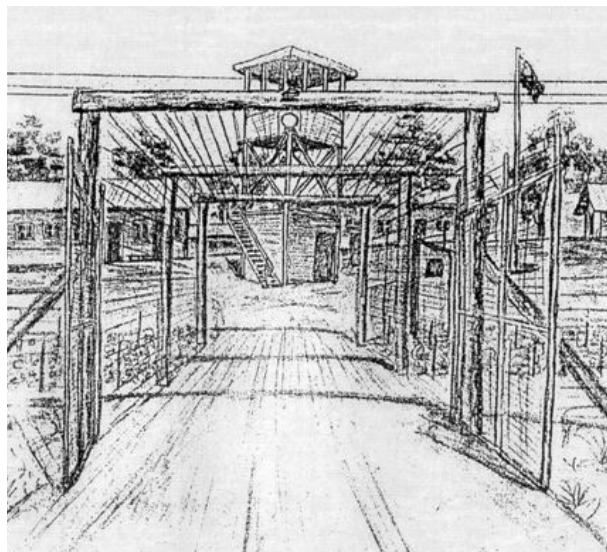
BRIEF HISTORY

Tatura & District Historical Society was reformed in 1984, and identified World War II wartime camps as a major focus for collection of historical material. The Society began to research the camps extensively, and develop a large collection of photographs, written material and memorabilia.

In 1991, the Bill Doller Room was opened to house the collection. It was named for one of the Society's members who played a major role in the construction of the room.

The opening coincided with the 50th anniversary of the arrival and internment in Camp 3 of members of the Temple Society, who were German nationals from Palestine.

There is a large ongoing program of research and the collection is continually expanding.



Camp Entrance and Tower

INTERNEES AND POWS

Two distinct groups were detained in camps in this area during World War II.

PRISONERS-OF-WAR (POWs) were, as the name implies, enemy servicemen who had been captured in various theatres of war, and transported to Australia for the duration of the war.

INTERNEES were civilians who were living in Australia, or other Allied territories, and were deemed to be a security risk because of their nationality. Their backgrounds were very diverse.

CAMPS IN THE AREA

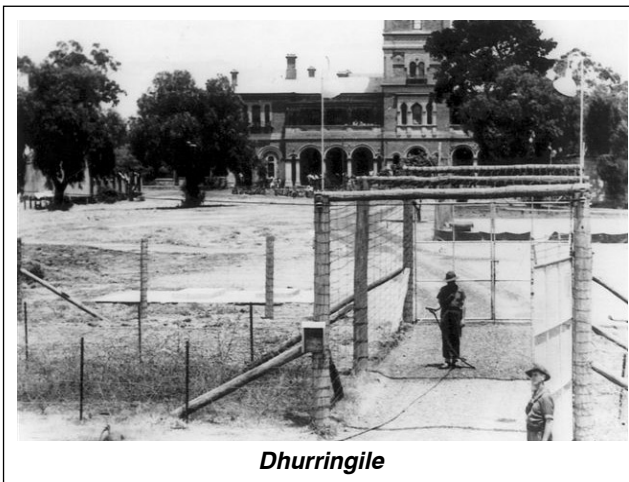
There were 7 camps in this area during World War II. Three of these camps were for POWs —

DHURRINGILE - 50 German officers and their batmen.

CAMP 13 (MURCHISON) - 4,000 POWs, mainly Italian and German, but also some Japanese after the Cowra Breakout in 1944.

CAMP 6 - (GRAYTOWN) - a bush wood cutting camp housing about 250 Italian, then German POWs, the latter being mainly crew members of the "Kormoran". Finnish seamen were held there too.

The remaining camps were for internees, and included **CAMPS 1 & 2 (TATURA)** and **CAMPS 3 & 4 (RUSHWORTH)**. Each of these camps housed around 1,000 internees. Camps 1 & 2 held single males, mainly Germans and Italians. Camps 3 & 4 held family groups; Camp 3 mainly German and Camp 4 Japanese families.



Dhurringile

PHYSICAL LAYOUT OF THE CAMPS

Initially, barbed wire compounds were established, and accommodation was provided in tents. In time, more permanent camps were established, with rows of army huts replacing the tents.

Sleeping huts were usually 5-6m x 20m (16-18' x 60'), constructed of galvanised iron. In addition, large recreation huts, kitchen and mess huts, and ablution blocks were provided.

Camp 1 also included a first class hospital, and was the only camp to be seweraged throughout.

Internally, the sleeping huts varied in layout. For example, in the case of family camps, sleeping quarters were partitioned off with masonite to accommodate family groups. POW camps, and internment camps for single males had barrack-style accommodation.

Guards and other support staff were garrisoned outside the compounds.



Family

LIFE IN THE CAMPS

Life in the camps varied, depending on the nature of the particular camp. Family camps incorporated playing areas for children and the necessary school accommodation.

Internees and POWs organised a wide range of activities to keep minds and bodies active, including craft work, education, gardening, theatre, music and sport. Some trusted prisoners worked on local farms.

The camps were very adequately supplied with food, and treatment by guards was generally deemed to be good.



Teacher and school children