



**Name of Camp:** Auschwitz-Birkenau

**Location of the Camp:** Poland (Southern)

**Brief Description of the Camp:**

Auschwitz-Birkenau served as a prison camp, extermination camp and slave labor camp. It was the largest concentration camp and was widely considered to be the most lethal of all the camps. It was located in Southern Poland, in a portion of the country that was annexed by Germany at the beginning of World War II. Heinrich Himmler (chief of the SS) ordered the establishment of this camp, of which there were three. Auschwitz I was the main camp and was reserved throughout history for political prisoners; mainly Germans and Poles. The conditions in the camp were terrible. Many of the prisoners were subjected to cruel experiments and torture. The camp was dirty and filled with disease. There was little food and cramped living conditions. The guards were very, very harsh and inhumane. Auschwitz II or Birkenau was intended for Russian POWs to be used for slave labor.

**How many people were imprisoned at the Camp? How many people perished at the Camp?**

In total, about 17 thousand people were imprisoned at Camp I at one time - approximately ten thousand Jews, four thousand Poles, and three thousand people from other different ethnic groups. Auschwitz-Birkenau was made up of three main camps. Within those three main camps, it is estimated that between 1.3 and 1.6 million people were murdered. That number is likely higher, as a result of deaths attributed to illness, exhaustion, famine, cold, despair, etc.

**What were the dates that the Camp was in existence?**

April 27, 1940 – Camp I opened. January 27, 1945 – approximately 7,500 sick or starving remaining prisoners were found by Soviet troops.

**When was the Camp liberated? Who liberated the Camp?**

The camp was liberated on January 27, 1945 by Soviet troops.

**Other interesting facts:**

- Auschwitz I was initially built for Polish political prisoners in June 1940.
- Auschwitz I was the largest camp of the system of camps.
- Auschwitz-Birkenau was a death, concentration, and labor camp.
- Auschwitz-Birkenau was made up of 3 main camps and about 40 sub-camps.
- About 200,000 inmates survived across the 3 main camps.
- More people died in Auschwitz than that of the British and American losses of WWII combined.