



# THE END OF THE WAR AND LIBERATION

The internement camps were liberated by allied troops during April and May 1945.

## BIBERACH

LIBERATED  
**23RD APRIL 1945**  
BY FREE FRENCH TROOPS

## WURZACH

LIBERATED  
**28TH APRIL 1945**  
BY FREE FRENCH TROOPS

## LIEBENAU

LIBERATED  
**29TH APRIL 1945**  
BY FREE FRENCH TROOPS

## LAUFEN

LIBERATED  
**4TH MAY 1945**  
BY AMERICAN TROOPS

As one would expect the amount of handicraft objects and artwork produced dropped off dramatically after the camps were liberated.

Suddenly the internees were able to leave the camps and explore the countryside. They took the opportunity to go into the local towns at will. Islanders no longer needed the distraction of handicraft to pass the time – they were now free to be “normal” again. A curfew was placed on them by the liberating forces for their own protection – but this was a minor inconvenience when compared to the restrictions they had suffered over the preceding almost 2½ years.

A craze emerged for collecting the autographs of your fellow internees in the camp. As the truth emerged that they had survived the war their thoughts turned to the bonds that had been formed between them during

their years of captivity. The collection of peoples’ autographs was one way of keeping a personal record of who they had suffered and survived such hardships with. People also painted little signed watercolours in each others’ books to commemorate their liberation.

Whilst the manufacture of everyday items by the internees was no longer a necessity, a number of the very special items were produced. These were crafted to express the mix of emotions felt by all the Islanders but first and foremost as a record of the joy felt by all that they were now able to return to their homes.



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