

Julio Comin

Julio Comin was among the first group of Spaniards to arrive on Alderney on 22 February 1942. Born on 2 February 1909 in Obon in the province of Teruel, Aragon in Spain, Comin became an officer in the Spanish Republican Army during the Spanish Civil War. After the fall of the Spanish Republic and the mass movement of Spanish citizens to the French border that followed, Comin was then imprisoned in camps for military personnel and Spanish Republican refugees in Saint-Cyprien and then Rivesaltes (1941 onwards), both in the Pyrénées-Orientales. After his transfer to the refugee camp in Argès, he was conscripted into the Nazi labour programme and sent to Brest to one of the camps in Saint-Pierre-Quilbignon in July 1941. The camps there were under German control and inmates like Comin had to undertake construction works under the control of the OT. He was sent to Alderney as a punishment after he was accused of trying to cut the barbed wire in the camp. He was housed in Norderney where he worked as a barber in the barbershop from May 1942. In his testimony delivered to the British military after liberation, Comin described several incidents involving ill-treatment by the Camp Commandant Dietz and his subordinates. He stated that Spaniards were paid more than the 'Russian' prisoners in Norderney, which allowed them to buy more food than their allocated rations (which matched those of the 'Russian' prisoners). He also suggested that the 'Spaniards also had more spirit than the Russians. They did not allow themselves to be ill-treated and took a united stand against any German who attempted to do so', a fact that British investigators noted after the war likely explains how they were able to survive a longer period of incarceration on the island. Comin remained on Alderney until the July 1944 when he was transported to Jersey. He was liberated when the British arrived there on 8 May 1945.

Louise Melanie Blamont

Louise Simonet was born on 20 April 1909 in Paris and took the name Blamont upon marriage. After separating from her husband, she 'left France voluntarily' in July 1941 because of a shortage of work in her home country. Following a period working in Bremen, she arrived on Alderney on 2 September 1942 in the employment of the OT. As a kitchen maid in Borkum camp, she received 3,200 francs a month in wages. After seven months, she transferred to a kitchen operated by the Deubau firm (possibly within a camp on Le Vallée). Between February 1944 and the liberation of Alderney on 16 May 1945, she worked in the Commandant's house in the kitchen before moving to a house in St Anne where she did laundry and sewing for the Wehrmacht. In her testimony delivered to British investigators on 18 May 1945, she stated that – although she had heard from fellow French citizens that beatings took place on the island – she had not experienced or witnessed any atrocities personally. The British investigators who interviewed her observed that she was one of several women who were 'of a fairly low class, rather frightened and probably prostitutes', although this was not conclusively confirmed.

Bendeli Weiss

Bendeli Weiss (born 22 February 1909 in Weissensee [Berlin] Germany) – was one of only three 'Zigeuner' (Roma) sent to Alderney as part of SS BB1. However, Weiss had been incarcerated by the Germans long before 1943. On 19 August 1938, his name appears on a document recording the personal effects of inmates of Sachsenhausen concentration camp, located in Oranienburg, twenty-two miles north of Berlin. Sachsenhausen (also known as Sachsenhausen-Oranienburg) opened in 1936 and was originally intended as a camp for political prisoners and criminals. In 1938, a large group of 'asocials' or 'work-shy' prisoners arrived, increasing the number of inmates to more than 9,200; Weiss was among the latter group. In reality, the widespread persecution of Roma people occurred not because they were 'work-shy' but because they were considered by the Nazis to be 'racially inferior', a fact that led to their being incarcerated, subjected to forced and slave labour, and murdered by the regime. Life in Sachsenhausen camp for all prisoners, including Roma, was characterised by harsh labour, hunger, disease and ill-treatment courtesy of the SS Death's Head guards that governed it. On 7 November 1938, Weiss's name appears on another document stating that he had been transferred, however, his destination is not recorded. Before his departure to Alderney in early March 1943, he was registered in Neuengamme with prisoner number 17,262. He survived incarceration in Sylt concentration camp on Alderney for more than a year. He departed the island with SS BB1 on 24/25 June 1944. Records from Neuengamme, Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora camps illustrate his movements from camp to camp between July and October 1944 after his reassignment to SS BB5. In the absence of records it is unclear whether he survived beyond 29 October 1944.