

Grave location of Irish Shipmate who died Arbeitslager Farge 1943

Dear, Malcolm,

Since 2001, One has been researching the history the 32 Irish born British Merchant Seamen who refused to work frei for the Nazis during WW2 and were relocated into Bremen-Farge Slave Labour Camp. Five of those Irish born Prisoners held in Farge died. O'Hara, Murphy, Corr and Knox were re-buried by a British Registration Unit and their remains were relocated to Rheinberg War Graves Cemetery on the 17 October 1957. The grave location of Patrick Breen of Blackwater, County Wexford, was never located. However, the following information may help their families.

I can now confirm that following their deaths in Bremen-Farge Slave Labour Camp during WW2. Gerald O'Hara (1st Radio Officer SS Devon), Thomas Murphy (AB SS Earlston), Owen Corr (AB MV Silverfir) and William Knox (AB SS British Commander) were first buried in the Osterholz Cemetery in Bremen, before their remains were reburied in the Rheinberg War Cemetery.

Patrick Breen (AB SS Athelfoam) from Wexford died on the 13th May 1943 in Rotenburg Hospital and his remains were believed to have been buried in the mass grave in Farge along with other deceased slave labourers before being moved to an unknown location in Bremen. Patrick is also listed on the Tower Hill Memorial as missing.



Graves LtoR: AB Thomas Murphy, RO. Gerald O'Hara, AB. Owen Corr, CWGC Rheinberg,



Cross placed at Bremen-Farge Massgrave

However, I can now confirm from enquiries that Patrick Breen was buried on 24 May 1943 in Osterholz Cemetery, Bremen, in a location where the Memorial to Foreign Victims of War, and adjacent to the Dutch War Memorial. (Near the west entrance to Osterholz Friedhof there is a section containing 170 graves of Dutch war victims who died in Bremen and the surrounding area, the names of 63 other war victims are on a memorial. In the immediate vicinity of the chapel there is a Memorial for Foreign Victims of War, A Bronze sculpture by Gerhart Schreiter "Two Mourning Women" marks the location.). Although Patrick's remains were never located by the British Graves Registration unit in 1957, at least his relatives now know the whereabouts of his remains,

albeit in a mass grave, and of the sequence of events leading up to the reburial of other Shipmates in Rheinberg War Cemetery in 1957.

In April 2005 during a Commemoration in Germany organised by the Irish Seamen's Relatives Association (1939-46) a wooden cross constructed by a Dublin Busman was placed in remembrance of Patrick Breen from Wexford at the site of the former mass grave where it was then believed Patrick had been originally buried following his death in 1943.

Attached photos: Cross placed at Bremen-Farge Massgrave, Photo Graves LtoR: AB Thomas Murphy, RO. Gerald O'Hara, AB. Owen Corr, CWGC Rheinberg, Source: Peter Mulvany

P.S.

Locating the burial location of Patrick Breen was an outstanding issue from 2001. Patrick was effectively missing until now. Bremen Authorities were very helpful and at my request went through all their extant WW2 records and confirmed via email that Osterholz Friedhof in Bremen was his burial location. One had always thought Patrick had his remains buried in the Mass Grave adjacent to Bremen-Farge Slave Labour Camp. Although Patrick's remains are in another mass grave, at least we can now positively identify the location/area of his burial for the sake of the families. Appreciate the MNA assistance.

Best Wishes
Peter