Archaeologia Historica Polona
vol. 31, 2023, pp. 241–269, ISSN 1425–3534, DOI: 10.12775/AHP.2023.009

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"Weekdays in hell" – the materiality of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf*

Abstract. The Site of National Remembrance in Łambinowice, Poland, is a complex of former prisoner-of-war (PoW) and resettlement camps that functioned in the vicinity of the village from the time of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871 until 1946. This article focuses on the material remains and landscape transformations related to the functioning of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf. The authors present the applied methodology of the "Science for society, society for science at the Site of National Remembrance in Łambinowice" project, in which available archival sources and obtained archaeological data complement each other. Owing to this holistic approach it was possible to conduct a more complete inventory and mapping of what has remained of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf in the present day.

Keywords: Lamsdorf, PoW camp, LiDAR, remote sensing, landscape, materiality.

* We would like to thank all the participants and volunteers who took part in the archaeological works at the Site of National Remembrance in Łambinowice in 2022–2023. The project was co-financed from the state budget under the program of the Ministry of Education and Science of Poland titled "Science for Society", no. NdS/545193/2022/2022, amount of the funding: PLN 560,740, total value: PLN 560,740.
Conflict of interest: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Introduction

Over the last decade, there has been a discernible increase in the interest of Polish archaeologists in the matters of broadly understood archaeology of the present – sometimes referred to as *the archaeology of the recent past*, *the archaeology of the contemporary past*, or *the modern conflict archaeology*. The noticeable nor changes can be linked to extensive trends in archaeology in Europe and worldwide. Archaeology is becoming less and less *archaīos* (*Archaeologies* 2001; *Contemporary archaeologies* 2009; González-Ruibal 2019). The modern era and its heritage have already permanently entered the orbit of archaeology and the significant progress made in theoretical reflection on the subject. There are some limitations to the topics and research problems that have long been a domain of historians based on "classical historical sources", as we might call them. In short, not everything has been recorded in the form of written documents or visual sources, many of which are dated to the 20th century. This conviction serves as the foundation for archaeological (and, indeed, multidisciplinary) research, such as studies on the multidimensional experience and materiality of the First World War (Saunders 2007), the Spanish Civil War (González-Ruibal 2020), concentration camps from the Second World War, the legacy of the broadly understood Holocaust (Sturdy Colls 2015), and even secret nuclear bases from the Cold War period, which were considered a potential beginning of the Third World War (Kiarszys 2019). Today, archaeological research of the broadly understood contemporary past has become a firmly established field of study.

Similar processes are also visible in Polish archaeology. Evidence includes not only numerous published articles addressing this topic, but also monographs that highlight the value of archaeology in examining material remains from the very recent past (e.g., *Archeologia totalitaryzmu* 2015; *Archeologia* 2016; *Militarne pozostałości* 2019; *Archeologia wobec materialnych śladów* 2023). One of the reasons for the growing interest in the archaeology of the contemporary past in Poland seems to be the possibility of acquiring financial resources from state agencies recognizing not only the scientific potential of this type of endeavours, but also the social and cultural ones. In this respect, one can name a few examples, such as the scientific projects carried out by Anna Izabella Zalewska (e.g., 2017; see also *Archologia frontu wschodniego* 2021), the research concerning German war crimes and crimes against humanity during the Second World War in Gdańsk, Pomerania (e.g., Kobiałka 2022; Kobiałka *et al.* 2024), or that on former German labour and concentration camps – as in the case of KL Plaszow (e.g., Karski 2020; Karski, Kobiałka 2023).

As in the case of many others, the above-mentioned scientific projects started with the interest of previous generations of Polish archaeologists, the research of whom was significantly ahead of their time in some cases, as well as in the broader

reflection of European archaeology. This is evidenced by the fact that in the 1960s, Polish archaeologists had already carried out the first archaeological works on the site of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp – only 22 years after its liberation by the Red Army (Karski, Kobiałka 2021). The research on the material traces of the Katyń Massacre is another example that is well known in Poland and around the world that testifies to the value of archaeological work on the remains of the recent past (e.g., *Katyń* 1996; Kola 2005). One of the latest Polish projects carried out in the spirit of a similar paradigm is "Science for society, society for science at the Site of National Remembrance in Łambinowice" (Fig. 1) (Kobiałka, Kostyrko *et al.* 2023; Kobiałka, Pawleta *et al.*, 2003a; 2023b).

The spatial context of our project is the Site of National Remembrance in Łambinowice (until 1945: Lamsdorf) – a complex of a former PoW and resettlement camps that operated near the village in various times, covering an area of several hundred hectares. In recognition of the uniqueness and importance of the site in the post-war period, it became legally instituted as a Monument of National Remembrance, and since 2002, it has been functioning as the Site of National Remembrance in Łambinowice.

The first PoW camp was established there during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871. It was at that time that an area near the village was prepared for accommodating approximately 6,000 French soldiers taken captive on the battlefields. During the First World War, up to 90,000 prisoners of the Entente countries were to be detained in the Lamsdorf PoW camp. Then, in the interwar period, some of the camp and military training grounds were used as a resettlement camp for Germans displaced from the Second Polish Republic who were to be relocated to Germany. During the Second World War, there were two permanent camps operating near the village, namely, Stalag VIII B (344) Lamsdorf and, from the mid-1941, Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf. Finally, once wartime hostilities in the region had ended, the Polish communist authorities repurposed part of the military training ground infrastructure as a labour camp designed for accommodating the local German population before their displacement to Germany (*Obozy w Lamsdorf* 2006).

The post-war history of the "campscape" is an outcome of various decisions. Once again, a significant portion of the former stalags became a military training ground where detachments of the Polish Army held drill regularly, destroying the original historical substance associated with the camps. Furthermore, many buildings were demolished by the locals seeking to satisfy their own needs. After the war, literally everything was in high demand, and even the wood from the walls and floors of the barracks was considered desirable free firewood. Only fragments of the infrastructure of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf were spared for the needs of the present-day Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War established in 1964. Today, this area covers slightly over 30 hectares out of the over 300 hectares of the original camp area of 1939–1945. Only several prisoner barracks have been preserved and

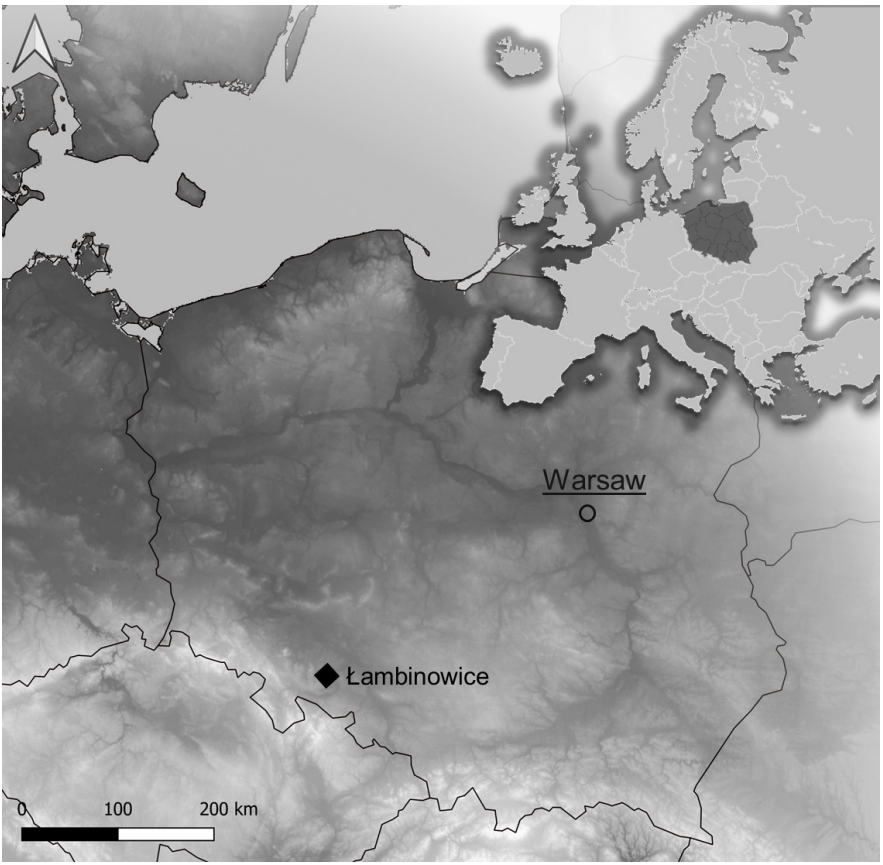

Fig. 1. Location of Łambinowice on the map of Poland and Europe (developed by K. Karski)

are curated as ruins. One of the former barracks has been reconstructed and is now used by the Museum for educational purposes. However, the surrounding forests and bushes hide a vast number of material traces related to the history of imprisonment and military activities that have been neither fully documented nor monitored. The use of archival materials is based on a static image, on a given momentum of the past historical reality. Archaeology is able to expand this perspective and offer a more dynamic picture of landscape transformations by applying methods and tools not commonly used in historical research (Kobiałka, Kostyrko *et al.* 2023; Kobiałka, Pawleta *et al.* 2003a; 2023b).

In the sections below, we focus on two key aspects that constitute the framework of the project, namely, the history of the camp and the non-invasive archaeological research conducted in its area in 2022–2023. The aim of the article is to present and discuss the research findings that expand the existing knowledge regarding the material remains and transformations of the landscape related to the PoW camps

operating at the current Site of National Remembrance in Łambinowice. The entire research model proves the great scientific, social, cultural, and conservation value of the research tasks that have been carried out.

The camp in the historical records – the history of the site

> Hugs and kisses for all my relatives and loved ones.
> My dear ones, say goodbye for many years. The time for me has come.
> I don't get up from the bed anymore. Your son Sergei.
> Give these notes to Boris Semyonovich Rodion, if he is alive. And if he's dead,
> go straight to the editor.
>
> Sergei Woropayev (2000, p. 177; translation by the authors)

The words of Sergei Woropayev, a Kazakh soldier of the Red Army and a prisoner at Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf that he ends his moving diary of German captivity on 5 March 1945 ("Weekdays in hell") with can be read at the exhibition of the Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War entitled "Place with a Scar" created at the site of the former camp (Fig. 2). They are the voice of a prisoner-of-war recalled by the authors of the exhibition as the last ones, in the section "Memory". There, among the ruins of PoW barracks, this expressive quote is one of many others that tell the tragic story of that place and the people imprisoned there in the past.

Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf was a Wehrmacht-run PoW camp, also called *Russenlager* ("Russian camp") and referred to as *Teillager "R"* in German documents, part of the vast Lamsdorf camp complex, one of the largest in Europe in the Second World War. The complex consisted of the first transit camp Dell PS: Dulag B Lamsdorf (26 August – 4 October 1939) which was transformed into a permanent camp for private soldiers and non-commissioned officers – Stalag VIII B, also called *Britenlager* ("British camp") due to the number of British prisoners prevailing over other nationalities. The Germans established *Russenlager* at the distance of over two kilometres away from the latter, to the north-west. It happened in July 1941 and was directly related to the invasion of the Third Reich on the Soviet Union. The new camp existed first as Stalag 318, and from the autumn of 1941 – as Stalag VIII F. For a short time in 1942 and 1943, the Lamsdorf complex also included the distant sub-camp in Teschen (based in Česky Těšin), former Stalag VIII D.

Stalag 318/VIII F Lamsdorf did not exist as an independent entity in this particular structure for long. Pursuant to the order of the Armed Forces High Command (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, OKW) of 4 May 1943, it lost its independent status; in June, it was subordinated to the nearby Stalag VIII B Lamsdorf. At the end of 1943, both camps received the new name – Stalag 344 Lamsdorf, under which they operated until the liberation in March 1945 (the previous name, i.e. Stalag

Fig. 2. Fragments (A–B) of the artistic installation entitled "Place with a Scar" in the area of Stalag 318/ VIII F (344) Lamsdorf, currently under the care and management of the Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War (photo by D. Frymark; © The Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War)

VIII B, was assigned to the camp in Teschen) (Sawczuk 1974a; Uryga 1974; Sawczuk, Senft 2006). Significantly, numerous organizational changes in the PoW camp complex were associated with frequent personnel changes in the authorities. The post of the Commander of *Russenlager* was held by, among others: Major Hoffmann, Major Kühn, Capt. Pawlik (as the camp manager), Major/Lieutenant Colonel Trnka, and, after the camp was subordinated to Stalag VIII B, it was managed by Capt. Blümich, and then, already functioning within Stalag 344 – by Major Messner and Colonel Braxator as the last commander (Sawczuk, Senft 2006, pp. 137–138).

Throughout its operation, the Lamsdorf PoW complex was the local centre of free labour for agriculture and industry in Silesia. During the Second World War, the Germans imprisoned about 300,000 people there – servicemen of 10 to 11 armies representing about 50 nationalities, who were striving to survive in very difficult living conditions. The most numerous groups included Red Army troopers, Polish PoWs (soldiers of the 1939 September Campaign and insurgents of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising), and British PoWs. Considered the most dangerous ideological enemies, Soviet PoWs were mass dying in Lamsdorf. The number of prisoners buried there who died mainly as a result of inhumane treatment, hunger, and exhaustion, is estimated at ca. 40,000. This number of victims is significantly higher if one also accounts for the captives who died or were killed during the evacuation march deeper into the Reich, which began at the end of January 1945 (Rezler-Wasielewska 2017, pp. 7–9).

A vast majority of victims of the Lamsdorf PoW camps were soldiers held at Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf. The first transport of these prisoners arrived from the Eastern Front in July 1941. They were placed in a closely guarded fenced area bereft of any roof over their heads. At that time, no structures had been built yet (Fig. 3). In these conditions, the captives had to survive the autumn and winter of 1941. They coped by seeking shelter in self-dug pits, which gave rise to primitive dugouts. Only the following year did they participate in building residential barracks. In total, the camp comprised 20 sectors, only one of which has been preserved to this day as curated ruins (Sawczuk, Senft 2006, pp. 131, 144).

The living conditions at the camp were horrid with the Red Army soldiers severely mistreated. Without the right to contact their families by mail and deprived of any care of humanitarian organisations, they were denied even minimal medical assistance; left to fend for themselves in worn-out clothes and shoes, forced to do gruelling work, they suffered extreme hunger and illnesses. They ate everything that was available, be it grass, leaves, or tree bark. The German guidelines regarding the treatment of the Red Army soldiers in captivity included the so-called *Russenbrot*, a special bread containing ground cereals, beet pulp, and sawdust. Regardless of its composition, it was rationed so sparingly that overworked prisoners could only dream of it. This situation resulted in a very high mortality rate among the captives.

Fig. 3. Historical photos (A–B) showing the creation and expansion of the camp infrastructure in the area of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf (© The Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War)

There were even cases of cannibalism (Marczyk 1987; Strazdowski 1995, pp. 59–62; Bednorz 1998, p. 66).

The number of PoWs kept behind the barbed wire at Lamsdorf was constantly fluctuating. These changes were intensified by the fact that it mainly served as a transit and reloading station where prisoners were evaluated based on their health condition and sent further to work commandos. It is also worth noting that at least 10,000 Red Army troopers from the Lamsdorf and Neuhammer (present-day Świętoszów) stalags were sent to KL Auschwitz to build Birkenau, where over 90% of them died (Hoess 1965, pp. 126–127; Lachendro 2010).

According to the camp registers, apart from Russians, the group of Soviet PoWs included also Ukrainians, Belarusians, Germans (*Volksdeutsche*), Poles, Lithuanians, Romanians, Moldovans, Georgians, Armenians, Uzbeks, etc. (Sawczuk, Senft 2006, pp. 150–151). They worked for various industries in Upper Silesia, especially coal mining, highway and railway construction, and agriculture. The exhaustion due to hard work combined with malnutrition, insufficient sanitary conditions and the brutality of guards and supervisors led to numerous accidents, self-harm incidents, and, in particular, a significant spike in mortality rates. The captives were disciplined based on terror, commonly treated with great contempt both at the stalag and within work units (Sawczuk 1974b; Sawczuk, Senft 2006, pp. 157–160). As described by one of the Warsaw insurgents:

> From the distance of 30–40 m, in the spotlight, I clearly saw the Russians passing through the gate. The Germans were hitting them with clubs as thick as an arm. Because the Russians were very weak, malnourished, and sick, many of them fell

> under the blows down onto the snow. The German guards continued to beat and kick those lying on the snow. The clubbed ones were howling terribly, their moans entwined with German curses. Ugh! Nightmare (Pluciński 1978, p. 75; translation by the authors).

After going through all the phases of exploitation outside the stalag, sick or severely exhausted prisoners would return to the camp to either regenerate or die.

Half a kilometre west of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf, there is a PoW necropolis – the Cemetery of Soviet PoWs. It was established in 1942 due to the high mortality rate of these soldiers, who were previously buried in nameless overlapping mass graves on both sides of the cemetery, today called the Old Prisoner of War Cemetery. In the new place, the same burial method was applied (with the body stripped of clothing), the burial itself executed so as not to attract the attention of outsiders (Fig. 4). The cemetery has been given its current shape in 1964. At that

Fig. 4.
Historical photos (A–B) documenting the results of post-war exhumation works on mass graves located near Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf (© The Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War)

time, the Monument dedicated to the Martyrdom of Prisoners of War was also built, where subsequent anniversary celebrations of the liberation of Stalag 344 Lamsdorf have been held annually to this day (Rezler-Wasielewska 2000).

However, Soviet PoWs were not the only soldiers kept in *Russenlager*. In the autumn of 1943, the Germans brought Italians there (from 1,200 to 10,000) – recent allies whom they treated with exceptional brutality (Senft 2000; Wilczur 2001). Of the massive number of approximately 72,500 Polish Army soldiers taken captive during the 1939 campaign who passed through the Lamsdorf stalag, at the end of the war, there were only about 50 Poles left at *Russenlager* (Stanek 2017, pp. 31–38, 64). The Serbs and the French were held there, likewise. In the autumn of 1944, a group of almost 6,000 Warsaw insurgents was accommodated there, too. Among them, there were ca. 1,500 officers, 1,040 women, and 650 children. Once the selection and registration steps had been completed, many of them were transported to other camps (12 in total). For them, Stalag 344 was only a distribution camp, a stop on the path of PoWs (Stanek 2015). This was not only the fate of the Home Army soldiers at Lamsdorf. In the immediate vicinity of *Russenlager*, there was a temporary tent camp for several thousand civilians taken from Warsaw. Some groups of civilians were even briefly confined in the PoW sectors of the camp (Stanek 2015, pp. 78–89). In October, another group was brought to the camp, namely, almost 50 soldiers of the Home Army, partisans from Kielce. However, they were not granted the status of PoWs and were sent to KL Gross-Rosen (Mazurek 1997, pp. 140–150). The number of PoWs increased also by approximately 1,600 Slovak insurgents who were transported to Lamsdorf in the autumn of 1944 (Kavec 1993; Nowak 2000, pp. 76–78).

The Geneva Convention relating to the Treatment of Prisoners of War of 27 July 1929 expressly prohibited discrimination against PoWs. In practice, in every aspect of life at the camp, the Third Reich treated specific groups of these captives in significantly different ways (Stanek 2019). *Russenlager* was not an exception, where inhumane treatment of the Red Army soldiers and Italians, in particular (and to a lesser extent also other prisoners) was the norm.

With the eastern front approaching, most of the prisoners left Lamsdorf on 24 and 26 January 1945, on foot, in columns of 1,000–4,000 escorted by guards. An ad hoc selection was carried out with the weak and the sick left at the camp (including ca. 6,000 Soviet PoWs from *Russenlager*). Prisoners from work units also joined the marching columns. The exhausting march, which claimed a number of victims that is difficult to estimate, ended deep inside the Reich for some in mid-March, for others even at the end of April. That time was just as difficult for sick PoWs, left to their own devices at Lamsdorf. On the evening of 17 March 1945, Soviet troops of the 55th Infantry Corps from the 21st Army of the 1st Ukrainian Front entered *Russenlager*, liberated dying Soviet PoWs (according to various estimates, from 500 to 4,000) and a handful of Warsaw insurgents. Some prisoners, like Sergei Woropayev, died shortly after the liberation (Stanek 2018; Woropayev 2000, p. 174 –179).

The camp in the material records – non-invasive archaeology of the site

Based on the potential and integration of historical and archaeological research methods, the applied and implemented project methodology is presently often used in Europe in the context of archaeological schemes concerning material remains dating from the 20th century. It also works perfectly for Polish archaeology, offering a more complex picture of what has been left of individual PoW camps, labour camps, concentration camps, or death camps (Kostyrko, Kobiałka 2020; Karski, Kobiałka 2021). The case of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf is not fundamentally different from other sites studied by our team. Owing to the diversity and multiplicity of verbal, visual and material sources it was possible to develop an even more precise mapping and inventory of the variety of material traces and landscape transformations that are related to the military history of the examined site. Remote sensing data (e.g., historical maps and blueprints, historical and contemporary aerial imaginaries, airborne laser scanning), geophysical surveys, and metal detector surveys offer an abundance of methods and sources that allow us to present the state of preservation of camp remains more fully today.

Traces of past human activity can be accurately interpreted based on airborne laser scanning (ALS) derivatives mainly owing to the fact that they often take the form of small terrain elevations imperceptible to the human eye, reflected on the canvas of digital terrain models (DTM), where the size of the form depends on both the state of preservation and its previous shape. A DTM is a result of processing performed on measurement data obtained while scanning the terrain surface from the aircraft deck. The mentioned traces are visible in the form of topographic anomalies – fragments of the studied landscape that stand out from the context in the form of either concave or convex terrain irregularities. Some of these topographic features exhibit characteristics indicative of various types of human activity. These features are then represented in a spatial digital database as linear or polygonal vector structures.

In the context of the above-described activity, important aspects related to data collection and their subsequent processing should be considered. The subsequent method of presenting the discussed data is yet another issue. There are numerous methods for visualising ALS results presented in the form of DTMs. Six of them were adopted for the purposes of interpreting the studied landscape, including the hillshade model (HS), the local dominance analysis (LD), the sky-view factor (SVF), the slope analysis, the combined visualisation of archaeological topography (VAT), and the simple local relief model (SLRM) (see more in Kobiałka, Kostyrko *et al.* 2023; Kobiałka, Pawleta *et al.* 2003a; 2023b).

The research area of the former *Russenlager* is characterised by a small degree of terrain diversity, which can be described as flat terrain. The area of the former camp is densely wooded, which is advantageous since areas that have been forested

for a long time provide better conditions for traces of past human activity to be preserved (Fig. 5). Remains covered with forests can maintain their own form of terrain, unlike areas subjected to either intensive ploughing in farmed fields or shallower ploughing applied in forests. After the camp was closed, the area was gradually reforested with no agricultural activities that could affect the state of preservation of the relics; potential damage could result from intensive forestry activities or activities related to the use of this area for military training purposes. The exception is the area open to visitors, which has been deforested and the remains of the barracks have been uncovered.

Given the above-mentioned facts and the information about the general characteristics of ALS-derived visualisations (Kokalj, Hesse 2017), it should be stated that the greatest potential could be expected from SLRM, VAT or LD, bearing in mind that they work best when used alternately or when combined with others that emphasise the presentation of forms showing distinct terrain features (e.g., HS, slope, SVF or an appropriately presented DTM in a colourful composition). Based on ALS derivatives, a total number of 473 structures documented in the form of polygons were identified for the Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf area

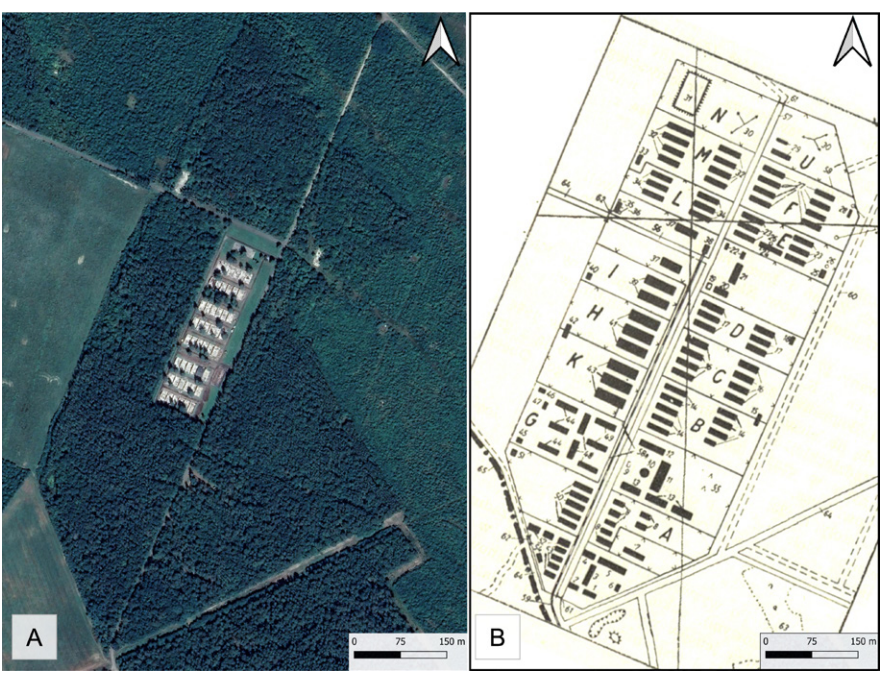

Fig. 5. The area of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf. A – contemporary ortophotomap (source: geoportal.gov.pl); B – a blueprint of the camp based on testimonies of the PoWs (after Uryga 1974)

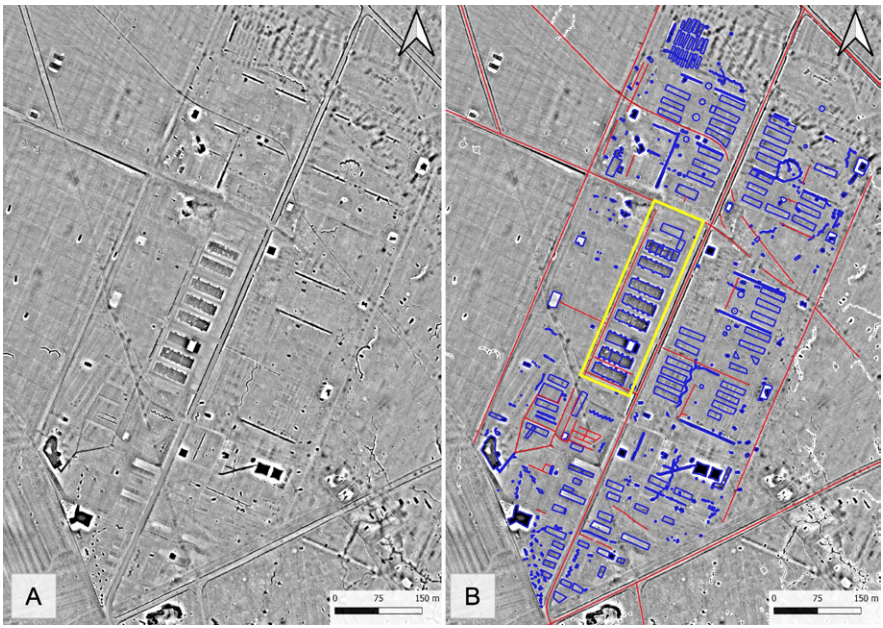

Fig. 6. The area of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf. A – visualisation of the ALS derivatives (local dominance and hillshade visualisation type); B – interpretation of the ALS data in the form of polygons (in blue) and lines (in red). Marked in yellow is the area of the former camp currently open to visitors (developed by S. Tomczak; © The Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War)

(Fig. 6). While performing the task related to the interpretation of the ALS derivatives, several traces characterised by various shapes were documented, which were classified into two basic groups, namely, concave (negative) and convex (positive) remains. These were further divided into two subtypes, presented using a linear vector (mainly structures related to thoroughfares) and polygons (mainly relics of buildings and those with an unspecified function).

For the needs of analysing fragments of the post-camp landscape, a vertical aerial photo from 1944 from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) was interpreted (Fig. 7). It clearly shows the layout of the buildings of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf, its boundaries, as well as the internal division and arrangement of roads. A regular arrangement of fields on the western side of the camp is also clearly discernible there. Based on the interpretation of the aerial photo, 301 structures with their own terrain shape were registered. They were presented in the form of polygons (Fig. 7: B). Camp remains in the form of lines have been associated with the existence of thoroughfares and structures related mainly to traces linked to the existence of a training ground there. This group included, among others, shooting ditches, although some included in both the

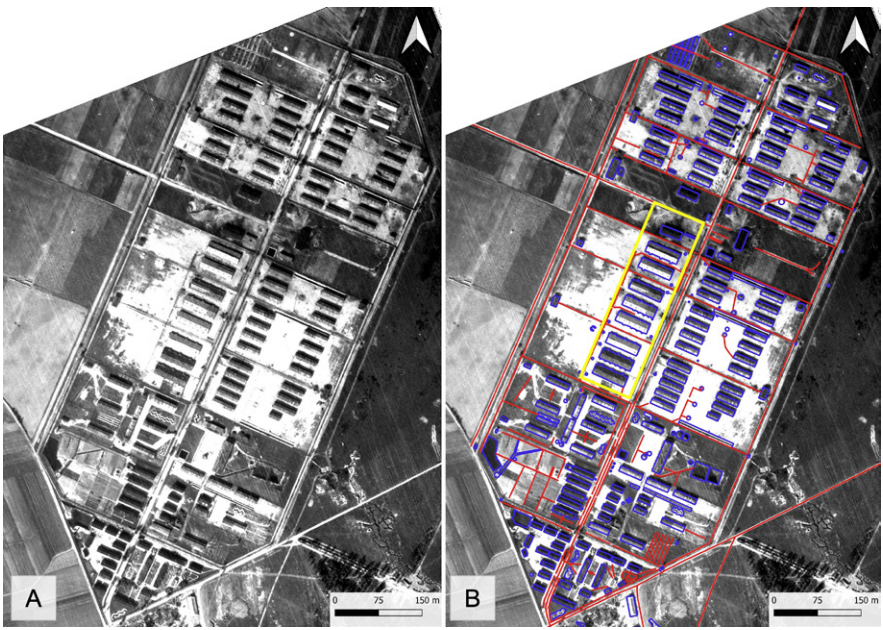

Fig. 7. The area of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf. A – historical aerial photo of 16 October 1944; B – interpretation of a historical aerial photo of 16 October 1944 in the form of polygons (in blue) and lines (in red) (source: NARA; developed by S. Tomczak)

ALS data and the aerial photo indicate they were used at the time when the camp was in operation. In short, the aerial photo serves as an important reference for interpreting the ALS data.

The visualisation of the ALS data also shows quite precisely the boundaries of the camp and its internal division. The main thoroughfares marked out in the *Russenlager* area and some of the smaller paths between the buildings were interpreted. Unspecified remains were also defined as linear structures, likely a system for distributing water from the hydrophore or for supplying water to the hydrophore. All traces of buildings, both residential (barracks) and others such as baths, latrines, warehouses, kitchens, fire reservoirs, were marked as polygons (Fig. 5: B) (see more in Uryga 1974).

Particular attention should be paid to the earthen barracks that distinguished *Russenlager* from Stalag VIII B (344) Lamsdorf (Kobiałka, Kostyrko *et al.* 2023). Ludwik Uryga (1974) reports that newly-arrived prisoners spent the first nights there until assigned to a specific barrack. Remote sensing data allows one to indicate the place where the earthen barracks were located and also to locate individual remains of the buildings (Fig. 8: A). These are also visible in the photo from the NARA (Fig. 8: B).

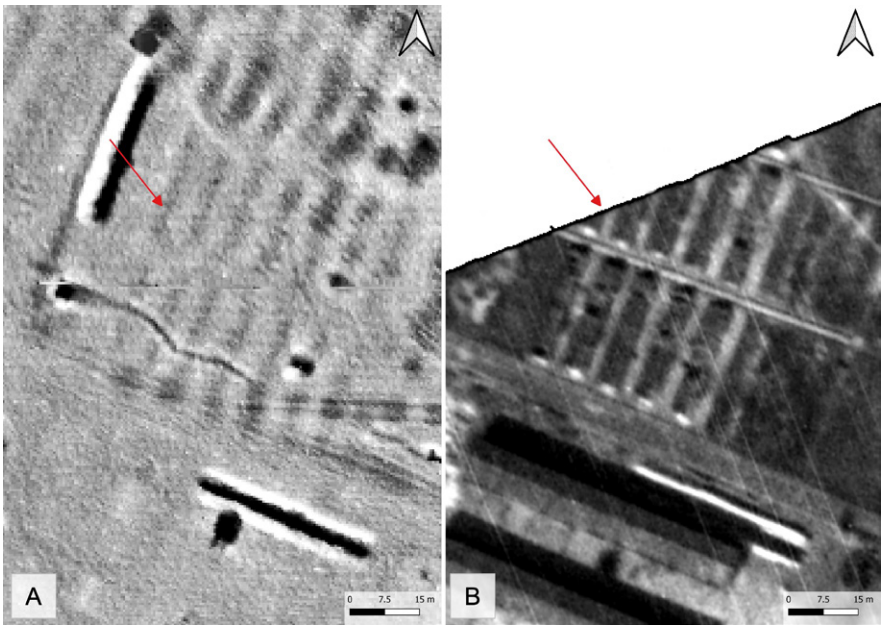

Fig. 8. The area of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf. Earthen barracks in the *Russenlager* area. A – ALS visualisation with a red arrow pointing to one of the barracks; B – historical photo of 16 October 1944, the red arrow points to the same barracks (source: NARA; developed by S. Tomczak; © The Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War)

Throughout the camp, relics of the barracks have been preserved in the form of rectangular positive structures of various lengths, up to 62 m long and ca. 17.5 m wide. They protrude above the ground by approximately 1.4 m. In the part currently open to visitors (marked with a yellow outline in Fig. 6: B and 7: B), the relics of the barracks have been preserved, very clearly visible in the ALS data. Between the buildings, there are roads, paths, and drainage lines that run parallel to them. The visualisation shows not only the location and external outline of the buildings but also their internal division (Fig. 9: A). This applies only to a few barracks and may be related to the building construction with the use of additional beams or walls (?). Although the cause of these differences is hard to determine, assumedly, the condition of this part of the buildings varies due to different types of building material. However, this can be due to post-depositional processes having a greater impact in this part of the camp compared to other ones where the condition of the preserved buildings is not as good. Abandoned, the ruins slowly decayed or were deliberately devastated, and also exploited/deconstructed for building material – as confirmed in the historical records (Kobiałka, Kostyrko *et al.* 2023).

A linear vector was used to mark elongated remains of various widths and lengths that occur throughout the entire examined area. Their location corresponds

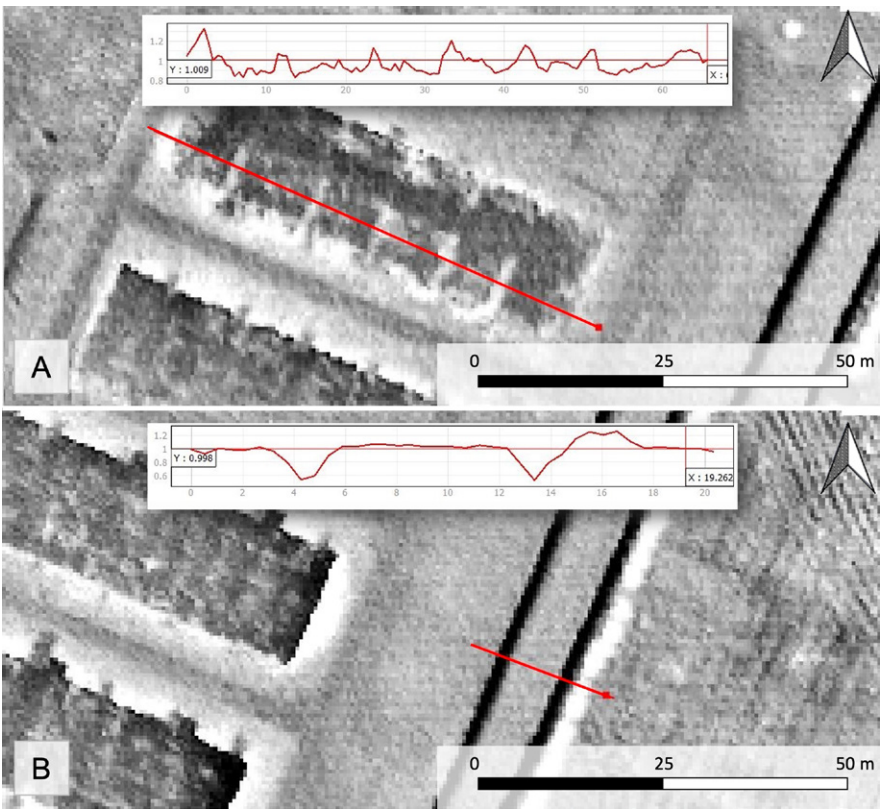

Fig. 9. The area of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf. A – fragment of the ALS visualisation from the so-called profile cut (the profile vector shown at the bottom of the image) made through a structure that is a trace of the barracks; B – fragment of the ALS visualisation from the so-called profile cut (profile vector shown at the bottom of the image) made through a structure that is a trace of the main road in the camp (developed by S. Tomczak; © The Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War)

to roads that might have been used both during the operation of the camp and later on. When compared, the camp plan and the aerial photo show clearly discernible main roads and some narrower paths (marked in Fig. 6: B as linear structures, in red) related to the functioning of *Russenlager*. An example of the main road dividing Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf in the north-south direction is presented in Figure 9: B with a profile. It is approximately 7 m wide. There are remains of ditches approximately 60 cm deep on both sides of the road.

One should also mention areas likely used for agricultural and gardening purposes (Fig. 10). They are visible in the photo from the NARA (Fig. 11). Figure 10 clearly shows flower beds where two PoWs are working. The man with the shovel is probably standing next to square boxes marked out for cultivation. A watchtower

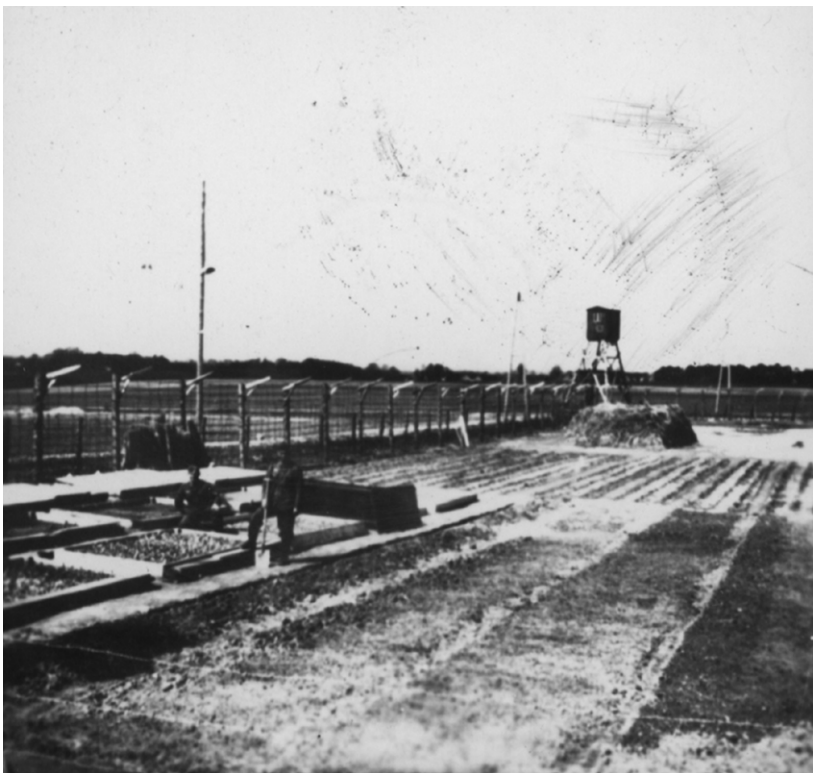

Fig. 10. The area of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf. PoWs working on the garden plot and a view of the watchtower (© The Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War)

can be seen in the background. Some of the watchtowers can be located owing to the shadow they cast and can be spotted in the aerial photo (Fig. 11). For example, in Figure 11: A, a tower is marked with the yellow arrow and its shadow with the green arrow. Neither traces of potential cultivation sites nor watchtowers can be marked using remote sensing data alone. They do not appear to have any topographic expression in the ALS data, which highlights the benefits of using multiple data sources.

However, ALS visualisations did not allow us to determine the location of all the barracks known from the plan or the aerial photos. This might be due to the deformation of the terrain caused by the construction of wide roads in this area (related to the functioning of the military training ground) allowing heavy vehicles (including tanks) to pass through, leading to even greater changes at the post-camp site.

Although it might seem a platitude, it is worth emphasising that the ALS data allow for the analysis of the "long duration" of a given landscape and subsequent

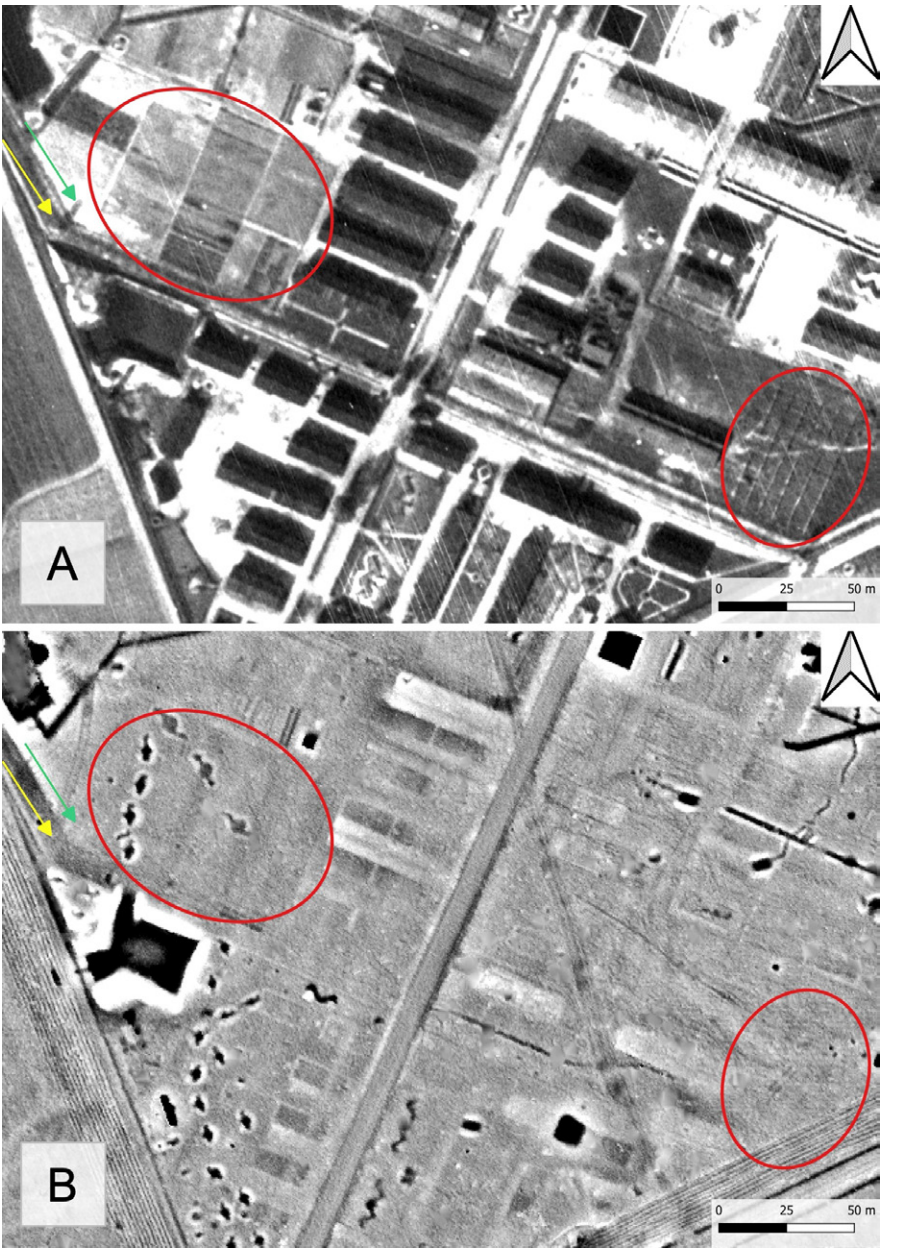

Fig. 11. The area of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf. A – historical aerial photo of 16 October 1944. The red outlines indicate potential locations where patches with crops may have been located. The yellow arrow marks the watchtower. The green arrow indicates the shadow cast by the watchtower; B – visualisation of the ALS derivatives. The yellow arrow marks the location of the watchtower. The green arrow marks the place where the shadow was cast (developed by S. Tomczak; © The Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War)

changes occurring within it over the course of days, years, decades, and even millennia. For the purposes of the project, we have taken an inventory of traces related to the Lamsdorf PoW and resettlement camps. However, an important part of the landscape includes changes and transformations related to the functioning of military training grounds near the former Lamsdorf (later known as Polish Łambinowice). The palimpsest-like nature of LiDAR data is clearly visible in Figure 11: B, where combat positions and trenches intersect with the camp remains. Albeit part of the history of the local landscape, these features have not been analysed in detail in this study.

The remote sensing data and their interpretations were crucial for creating a digital solid model of the "campscape". The primary goal was to develop models of the infrastructure with an appropriate scale of representation and proportionality. As in the case of other memorials and their digital representations, the texturing and textured surfaces of the modelled solids were abandoned. This was done to avoid the impression of a realised and artificially created landscape (Oliva *et al.* 2015; Pastor, Pujol 2020). In addition, owing to this, it will be possible to use this model freely in the future in educational presentations to show the ambivalence between the present-day natural values of the site and its tragic and dark past (Figs. 12–13) (Blancas *et al.* 2021).

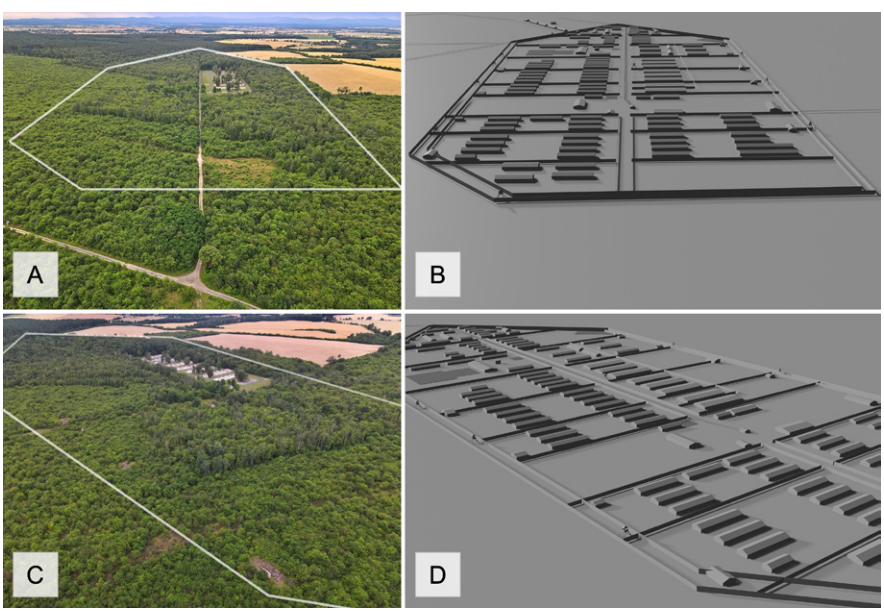

Fig. 12. Comparison of a view of the present-day Site of National Remembrance in Łambinowice (A, C) and the area of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) in the autumn of 1944 (B, D) (reconstruction and photo by K. Karski; © The Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War)

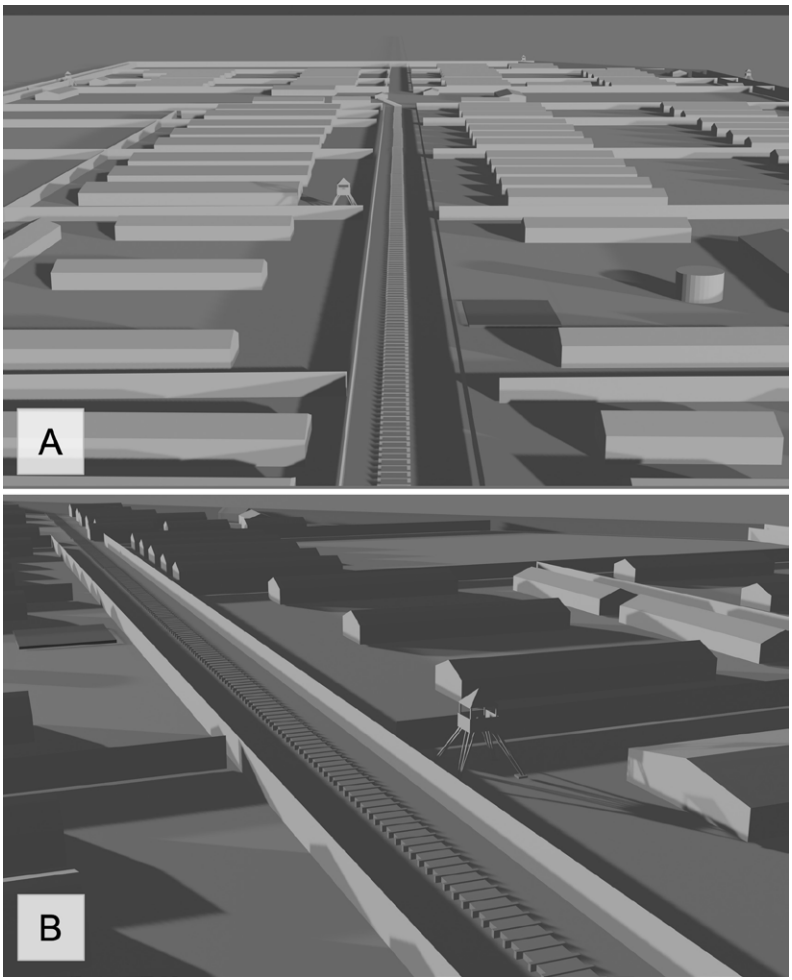

Fig. 13. The area of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf in the autumn of 1944 (A–B) (reconstruction by K. Karski; © The Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War)

As mentioned above, the largest group of PoWs detained at the Lamsdorf camps were soldiers of the Red Army. At the same time, they make for the highest number of prisoners who died or were killed during the operation of the camp (Rezler-Wasielewska 2000). The first mention of traces of their mass graves appeared in July 1945 (Nowak 2002, p. 234). According to this information, soldiers of the Red Army were buried in two locations known today. The first burials of the Soviet PoWs took place in the vicinity of the Old PoW Cemetery, approximately two kilometres south-east of *Russenlager*. Around February 1942, the burying of the corpses of Soviet PoWs was moved north-west of the main camp. There, about 500

m away, the largest concentration of mass graves was recorded. The actual state and situation of the mass graves in both locations were described by Stanisław Łukowski (1965) based on the forensic and medical files of the Soviet commission's expertise of 19–31 December 1945.

The work of the commission was headed by major of the health service of the Northern Group of Soviet Forces E.A. Kazantsev (Łukowski 1965, p. 83). At a certain stage, a group of Polish forensic medics participated in that work, too, producing a report on the examination of mass graves and corpses of the PoW camp in Łambinowice near Niemodlin on 11 January 1946 (Łukowski 1965, p. 91). Based on reports written in 1945–1946, in both burial areas of the Soviet PoWs that are known, there were 240 rows of graves, each approximately 2 m wide and 2.0–2.5 m deep. Depending on the location, the length of each row was ranging from 20 m to even 95 m. The bodies were covered with one or several layers. The burial density reached, in some cases, up to 5 bodies per 1 m^2 of a grave. It was estimated that approximately 40,000 Soviet PoWs were buried in the discovered mass graves (Popielski 1984, p. 8). One of the research issues that has not been clarified to this day is the information provided in the memoirs of one of the Polish research participants (Bolesław Popielski, PhD), who stated that in January 1946, he also visited one mass grave located in an unspecified place inside the main camp itself, and not in its vicinity (Popielski 1984, p. 5). This information was not recorded in the official reports.

As part of the non-invasive archaeological investigations conducted for the project, Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) was used to detect possible anomalies that could be related to mass graves near *Russenlager*. GPR is one of the geophysical methods commonly utilised in the field of archaeology. It offers a three-dimensional subsurface view up to the maximum depth of the deployed antenna, making it exceptionally beneficial in the search for buried archaeological relics and evidence of human interaction with the soil. For precise positioning during the survey, an RTK GPS instrument was used. This allowed research grids to be designed and anchored in specified areas and aligned with the National Geodetic Coordinate System (PUWG 92; EPSG: 2180). In total, 185 profiles were conducted with a cumulative length of 9,320 meters. GPR profiles were obtained at intervals of around 0.5 m. Spatial and measurement data were processed and integrated within a GIS environment (Fig. 14). The results of the survey and their interpretations are presented in the form of visualisations known as time-slices (Fig. 15). However, at this stage of the field research, the data interpretation has not been further verified, such as through test excavations or geological drilling.

The direct outcome of the radar-based measurement is a radar cross-section, also referred to as a radargram. It displays the amplitude of electromagnetic wave reflections from subsurface anthropogenic and natural features. The data obtained in the form of radar cross-sections underwent filtering using specialist software

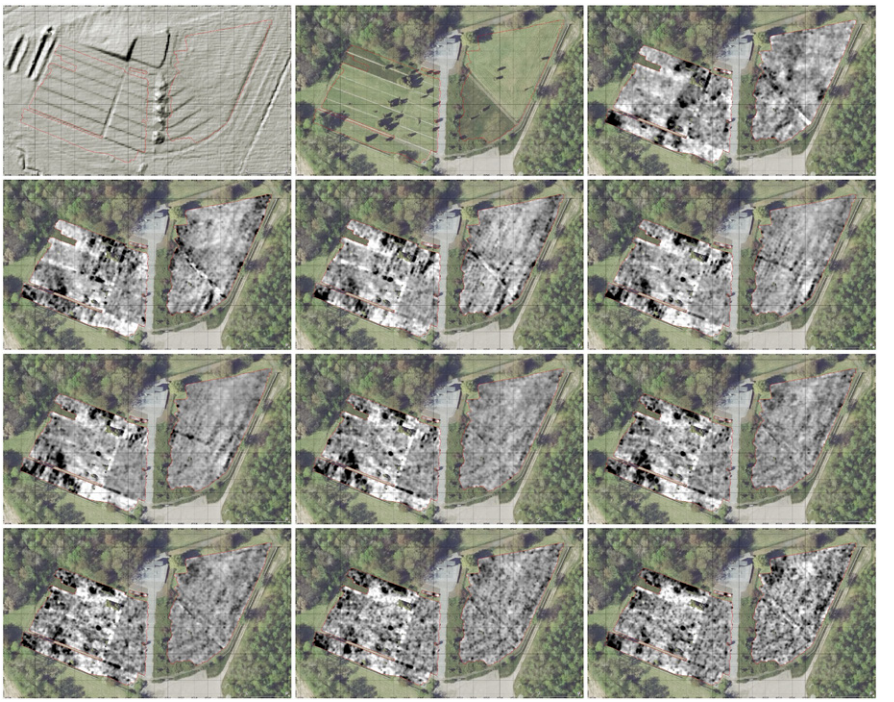

Fig. 14. Location of the GPR surveys and time-slices made at subsequent depth levels (ca. 0.4 m with 60% overlap) (developed by P. Wroniecki; © The Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War)

for radar and seismic data. Next, the noises generated by the transport trolley and natural factors were eliminated from the data set. This resulted in a series of colour-coded plans of planar GPR anomalies, separately for each relative depth measured in nanoseconds. Such data representation has become the standard in presenting GPR survey results in archaeology due to the ease of distinguishing characteristic shapes of archaeological/anthropogenic features of interest. In the adopted colour convention, the colour white depicts a negative amplitude while the black represents a positive amplitude. The graphics display successive time-slices at subsequent depths with a relative thickness of approximately 0.4 m/8 ns, with a coverage of 60%.

The final stage of the non-invasive reconnaissance and documentation of the material heritage of the *Russenlager* involved compiling the mapping of the "camp-scape" and metal detector surveys. These activities made it possible to find the material culture left behind by the PoWs held at Lamsdorf. The area of the former stalags is characterised by different accessibility and spatial development. The research was conducted outside the area administered by the Museum. It is mostly a woodland area, sometimes young wood with a high ratio of shrubs and low plants that limit visibility and accessibility. It should be estimated that about 20% of the

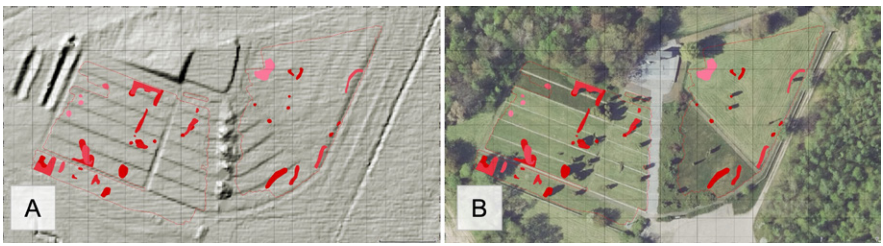

Fig. 15. Identification of potential anthropogenic anomalies (developed by P. Wroniecki; © The Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War)

site remains completely inaccessible. During the research, various material heritage that has been preserved until the present day was identified and catalogued. The structures forming the landscape of the memorial site include architectural relics (e.g., building foundations, concrete floors, containers, fragments of fence posts, fragments of entire building walls), barracks levelling, linear drainages, and the remains of water reservoirs, as well as zig-zag trenches. The survey also identified the activities of illegal looters looking for valuable archaeological artefacts.

Regular metal detector surveys were carried out in the area during workshops with volunteers. This was carried out in an easily accessible area managed by the Museum. During these surveys, more than 60 artefacts were discovered on one day (Fig. 16). All in all, almost 600 objects or their fragments were found during the project implementation in the years 2022–2023.

Fig. 16. Examples of artefacts found during metal detector surveys at the site (photo by E. Góra; © The Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War)

Conclusions

The history of the Lamsdorf's stalags and the people interned there during the Second World War are well known and described in the literature (e.g., *Obozy w Lamsdorf* 2006). They have been the subject of interest of state institutions, researchers, and regionalists almost since the Red Army entered the village and liberated the camps. There are some gaps in the archival sources regarding the operation of the Lamsdorf camps, though. This does not change the fact that thanks to the activities of the Museum, the history of the place and the people kept there is one of the best known, thoroughly researched and documented in comparison with other similar PoW camps, whether from the period of the Prussian-French War, the First and Second World Wars, as well as the post-war labour camp functioning between 1945 and 1946. Nevertheless, the research hypothesis set for the implementation of "Science for society, society for science at the Site of National Remembrance in Łambinowice" assumed that combining historical and archaeological research methods in one undertaking may yield new important findings as regards the material heritage related to the functioning of the camps in Lamsdorf (Kobiałka, Kostyrko *et al.* 2023; Kobiałka, Pawleta *et al.* 2003a; 2023b).

The key component of the research methodology relies on remote sensing data. Thus, the interpretation of ALS derivatives allowed over 300 negative and positive structures to be identified (and georeferenced), which can be unequivocally interpreted as camp remains. Based on the data analysis, the remains of the buildings of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf and its spatial organisation corresponding to the layout in the aerial photo taken in 1944 were identified, likewise. In order to carry out the above research, six DTM visualisation methods were applied, namely, hillshading, shaded relief, sky-view factor, simplified local relief model, local dominance, slope analysis, and visualisation for archaeological topography. The presented spectrum of data processing shows the possibilities and limitations of the DTM visualisation methods used in the context of landscape of the former *Russenlager*. The successful carrying out of interpretive work in the presented research area together with obtaining a general picture of the geomorphology of the landscape allows us to recommend the visualisation methods to be applied at other post-camp sites. It should be also emphasised that there is no single "best" method for visualising ALS derivatives, and the use of various methods during interpretation may bring additional benefits. This approach has been implemented during the analysis of the *Russenlager* area (Fig. 17).

The remote sensing data formed the basis for their integration with other research methods. There were geophysical surveys (GPR method), metal detector surveys, and the use of modelling to create 3-D models of the studied landscape. These are just some of the methods discussed in this article. They have yielded important additions to the history (and archaeology) of the studied site. Others

Fig. 17. Remnants of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf (photo by D. Frymark; © The Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War)

were presented and discussed in a few previously published papers, a result of multidisciplinary research concerning Lamsdorf's PoW and resettlement camps (Kobiałka, Kostyrko *et al.* 2023; Kobiałka, Pawleta *et al.* 2003a; 2023b).

Importantly, the case of the Site of National Remembrance in Łambinowice proves the effectiveness of combining several important archaeological perspectives (e.g., archaeology of the contemporary past, landscape archaeology, camp

archaeology, modern conflict archaeology). It offers an opportunity for a dialogue between history and archaeology, which may lead to asking new questions about the "old" problem (the history of the Site of National Remembrance in Łambinowice) and providing new answers. The work carried out at the Lamsdorf PoW camps clearly confirms such a stance. We have managed to document thousands of traces related to the past of the site, obtain material artefacts related to its history and the people detained there, and specify the possible location of mass graves holding the bodies of deceased prisoners of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf. These are all very important results that have been produced only owing to combining various scientific disciplines and their potential.

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