

Biberach 23rd April 2020

Dear Guernsey Friends, former deportees and families, friends on the Island and abroad,

On the day and date when Lager Lindele in Biberach was liberated by French troops, and which will never be forgotten by the deportees and the citizens of Biberach, we would like to give you an impression of our sympathy expressed in the local media. On behalf of the town administration I have tried to summarise in English the front page and two continuing pages inside of the local Weekly 'Biberach Kommunal' which was published yesterday.

I can assure you that the day is not forgotten in Biberach, and is commemorated in the school history syllabus when dealing with recent times.

With good wishes for you and your families – stay healthy and optimistic and hopefully „ we will meet again“

Rotraud Rebmann

Summary in English of the three pages published in today's issue of 'Biberach Kommunal', the local weekly.

In the recent issue of the local Biberach Weekly the date of 23rd April 1945 was extensively covered on three pages. Originally the plan was to commemorate this date on the premises of the former 'Lindele Camp', now a Police College. The Camp was liberated on this day 75 years ago by French troops, who then occupied the town. Mayor Norbert Zeidler was going to be present and deliver a speech, and pupils from the local Middle School were presenting texts which they had prepared in a special course with their history teacher. To the Mayor it is very important that this date is not veiled by Corona at the present time, but kept in vivid memory in our town.

Due to the Corona crisis this planned event had to be cancelled, but the full text of the Mayor's speech, as well as the message by Guernsey Bailiff Sir Richard Collas, and texts by the pupils are printed in this paper with now even more sustainable value.

The Mayor points out that Lager Lindele, founded in 1939 as an Army Base, was soon turned into a POW camp for French and English officers with a spectacular tunnel escape on 13th September 1941. It was never a concentration camp, but supposed to be a model Nazi camp, at times even supervised by the International Red Cross. Despite this humane aspect 146 Russian POWs died, and innocent citizens from the Channel Islands, mainly from Guernsey, were imprisoned from 1942 to 1945 and from 1944 to 1945 also some Jewish people, with some deaths in both cases.

Despite the brutality and hardships, hindrances and difficulties of camp life, so the Mayor, there were also experiences of humanity, of contacts between internees and locals, some of them lasting for life. These are the origins of our friendly relations with Guernsey, formal since 1997. Former deportees have visited our town, and numerous Biberach citizens have got to know the island. Contacts are supported by the Biberach Friends of Guernsey Association, and also by the Police College. This unique relationship with Guernsey is a real gift, and we are grateful for this kind and open relationship, which shows convincingly that hostility and hatred can lead to understanding, humanity, and friendship.

The texts in prose and verses which the pupils have prepared are mainly based on a book by Marietta Moskin, a Jewish girl, that has been translated by pupils of the same school. The main

topics of their texts are freedom and peace, hatred and violence, responsibilities today and in the future.

The Mayor ends with a quotation from the Bailiff's message: "It is so important that our communities can live in peace with one another and that our children and our children's children learn to appreciate the value of the freedom that we enjoy today."