



MasonCity, Iowa

Wednesday, March 25, 2009 11:30 PM CDT

Algona POW Museum schedules special events

Inside the BUS—eums:

- “Behind Barbed Wire” — The Midwest’s own 34th (Red Bull) division served the longest uninterrupted duty in U. S. Military history — 600 days. They make up a larger group (per capita) in German prison camps than any other group. Along with other ground units and the Army Air Corps, nearly 94,000 Americans were held in Nazi prison camps. About 1 percent died during their captivity.
- “Held in the Heartland” — The little-known topic of Axis POWs held in American prison camps is explored. By 1942, captured Axis POWs were being brought to camps throughout the United States. By the end of the war, approximately 425,000 of the Axis were in American camps; 372,000 of them German. In the Midwest, thousands of Axis prisoners worked in base and branch camps harvesting crops, building roads, cutting trees and digging sewer lines. Although these camps were in public view, many living today have no knowledge of their existence.

ALGONA — The Camp Algona POW Museum is sponsoring several events during April that focus on confinement and treatment of prisoners of war during World War II. Algona was the site for a prisoner of war camp that housed nearly 10,000 German prisoners during the war.

The museum committee will host a presentation and discussion at 7 p.m. April 7 at the Algona Public Library, 210 N. Phillips Street.

Dr. Michael Luick-Thrams will speak on the topic of the treatment of German POWs in American prison camps, and treatment of Midwest POWs in German prison camps. Luick-Thrams is the executive director of TRACES, a non-profit educational organization based in St Paul, Minn. There is no charge for the lecture.

On April 8, two of TRACES’ BUS-eums will be in Algona for viewing by the

public. The busses are traveling exhibits that contain artifacts, display panels and multi-media presentations.

One bus will feature the exhibit "Held in the Heartland" (German Prisoners in Midwest camps). The other bus features the exhibit "Behind Barbed Wire" (Midwest prisoners held in German camps).

The two buses will be in front of the Camp Algona POW Museum, 114 S. Thorington Street. They will be available from 4 to 7 p.m. The Camp Algona POW Museum will be open during those hours free of charge. Both BUS-eums have traveled extensively throughout the Midwest over the past several years and have been seen by thousands of adults and school students.

On April 9, from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., both high schools in Algona will host a BUS-eum. Bishop Garrigan High School will host "Behind Barbed Wire" and Algona High School will host "Held in the Heartland." Students from each school will tour the buses during class time.

The Camp Algona POW Museum will open for its fifth season on Saturday, April 4. It will be open from 1 to 4 p.m. each Saturday and Sunday through December. It is also open by appointment. For information, visit www.pwcamp.algona.org.

The museum features artifacts and information relating to the 10,000 prisoners who were held in the Camp Algona system during the war, as well as the American guards who supervised them.

The prisoners and guards were a daily presence in Algona and the surrounding area. Algona was the hub camp for a vast 34 branch camp system throughout Minnesota, Iowa, South and North Dakota.

Featured at the opening will be a new collection that has recently been acquired by the museum. Artifacts and information obtained from former German POWs can be seen.