

HERITAGE COUNCIL DETERMINATION

Determination Date	4 October 2018
Place/Object Name	Murchison Prisoner of War Camp
Location	410-510 Wet Lane, Murchison, Greater Shepparton City
VHR Number	H2388
Category	Heritage Place

At a meeting of the Heritage Council of Victoria on 5 April 2018 it was determined that, in accordance with Section 49(1)(a) of the Heritage Act 2017, the above place is of State-level cultural heritage significance and warrants inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register, subject to the tracked changes in the below report. This decision was reached having considered the assessment against the Heritage Council's criteria, other information contained in the attached report and all submissions received in response to the Executive Director's recommendation.

The Heritage Council endorses and adopts the attached report for the purposes of making its decision.



Professor Stuart Macintyre AO
Chair, Heritage Council of Victoria

Recommendation of the Executive Director and assessment of cultural heritage significance under Division 3 of the *Heritage Act 2017*



Name	Murchison Prisoner of War Camp (Camp No.13)
Location	410-510 Wet Lane, Murchison, City of Greater Shepparton
Provisional VHR Number	PROV VHR2388
Provisional VHR Categories	Heritage Place, Archaeological Place
Hermes Number	5592
Heritage Overlay	Greater Shepparton, HO57 (individual)



Murchison Prisoner of War Camp, Southern Cell Block, October 2017

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE HERITAGE COUNCIL:

- That Murchison Prisoner of War Camp be included as a Heritage Place and an Archaeological Place in the Victorian Heritage Register under the *Heritage Act 2017* [Section 37(1)(a)].

STEVEN AVERY
Executive Director

Recommendation provided to the Heritage Council of Victoria: 12 July 2018

Recommendation publicly advertised and available online: From 20 July 2018 for 60 days

EXTENT OF NOMINATION

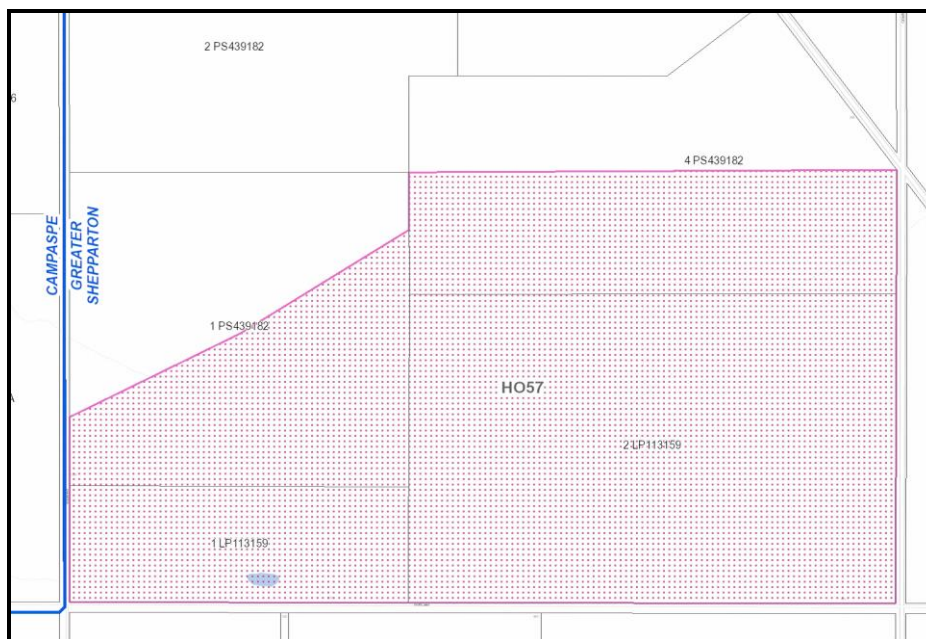
Date that the nomination was accepted by the Executive Director

19 November 1998

Written extent of nomination

Murchison Prisoner of War Camp (Camp No.13) is identified in the Greater Shepparton Heritage Study. The place has an individual heritage overlay, HO57.

Nomination extent diagram

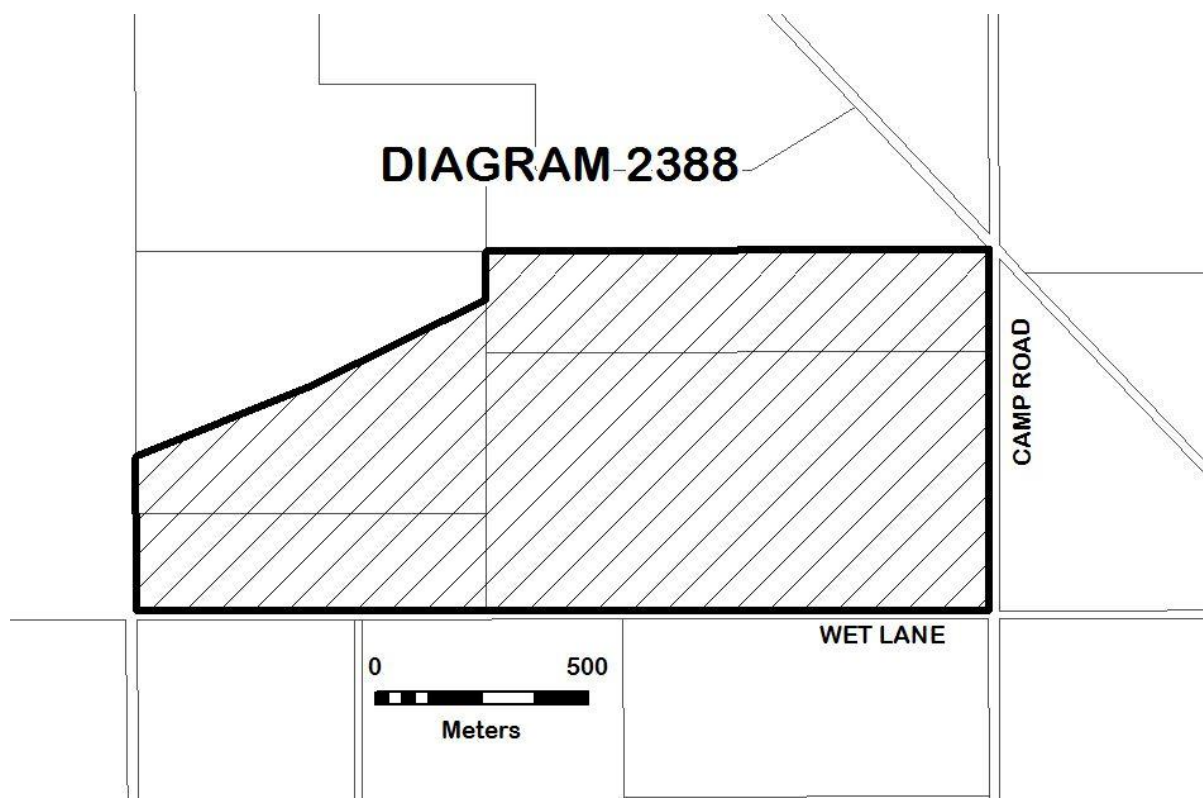


Is the extent of nomination the same as the recommended extent?

Yes

EXTENT OF REGISTRATION

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2388 encompassing all of Lot 2 on Lodged Plan 113159, all of Lot 1 on Lodged Plan 113159, part of Lot 4 on Plan of Subdivision 439182, and Part of Lot 1 on Plan of Subdivision 439182.



The extent of registration of Murchison Prisoner of War Camp in the Victorian Heritage Register affects the whole place shown on Diagram 2388 including the land, all buildings (including the exteriors and interiors), landscape elements, and historical archaeology.

RATIONALE FOR EXTENT

The proposed extent encompasses all of the features of the Murchison Prisoner of War Camp and is the same as the current Heritage Overlay.

AERIAL PHOTO OF THE PLACE SHOWING REGISTRATION



Name: Murchison Prisoner of War Camp
Hermes Number: 5592

BACKGROUND

WHAT IS AT THE PLACE?

This place consists of an area of mixed pastoral and bush land, which encompasses the above ground and subsurface remains of the Murchison Prisoner of War (POW) Camp.

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE PLACE?

Murchison POW Camp opened in 1941 as one of nineteen camps established throughout Australia during the Second World War. It held some 2,000 Italian, 1,300 German and 185 Japanese prisoners during the international conflict. Over 1,000 personnel were involved in guarding and administration duties, including local men from the Citizen Military Force reservists. The last Prisoners of War left the Murchison Camp in 1947. For a brief time after the war, workers on the Cattanach Canal were housed at the camp, and afterwards most of buildings were removed to surrounding townships and the land returned to farming.

WHO ARE THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS/REGISTERED ABORIGINAL PARTY(IES) FOR THIS PLACE?

This land is included in the Registered Aboriginal Party area of the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation.

STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT?

Murchison Prisoner of War (POW) Camp including all above ground and subsurface features, deposits and artefacts and plantings.

HOW IS IT SIGNIFICANT?

The Murchison POW Camp ~~amp~~ is of historical and archaeological significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register

Criterion A

Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion B

Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.

~~Criterion D~~

~~Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.~~

WHY IS IT SIGNIFICANT?

Murchison POW Camp is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

Murchison POW Camp is historically significant as the primary POW facility located in Victoria during the Second World War. The camp was established in 1941 and held some 2,000 Italian, 1,300 German and 185 Japanese prisoners captured during the conflict. The Murchison POW Camp demonstrates the strong commitment by the Australian government to upholding the rules of the Geneva Conventions. The Camp is associated with significant Second World War events, including the sinking of the HMAS Sydney by the German Raider Kormoran, the North African campaign, and the Japanese escape from Cowra in NSW. [Criteria A]

Murchison POW Camp is uncommon, being one of a small number of facilities established to detain Prisoners of War in Victoria during the Second World War. [Criteria B]

Murchison POW Camp is significant for its potential to contain archaeological remains, features and deposits relating to the operation of the camp. Valuable information is likely to be yielded about the lives of the prisoners and their guards; construction and phases of the buildings; and the operations of the camp. [Criteria C]

RECOMMENDATION REASONS

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDING INCLUSION IN THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER [s.40]

Following is the Executive Director's assessment of the place against the tests set out in *The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Thresholds Guidelines (2014)*.

CRITERION A

Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

STEP 1: A BASIC TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION A

The place/object has a *CLEAR ASSOCIATION* with an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life in Victoria's cultural history.

Plus

The association of the place/object to the event, phase, etc *IS EVIDENT* in the physical fabric of the place/object and/or in documentary resources or oral history.

Plus

The *EVENT, PHASE, etc* is of *HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE*, having made a strong or influential contribution to Victoria.

Executive Director's Response

Murchison POW Camp has a clear association with Australia's commitment to the Second World War and the establishment of Prisoner of War (POW) encampments in Victoria. The association is evident in the physical fabric and the documentary sources. Murchison POW Camp played a significant role in the imprisonment of foreign military personnel during the Second World War.

Criterion A is likely to be satisfied.

STEP 2: A BASIC TEST FOR DETERMINING STATE LEVEL SIGNIFICANCE FOR CRITERION A

The place/object allows the clear association with the event, phase etc. of historical importance to be *UNDERSTOOD BETTER THAN MOST OTHER PLACES OR OBJECTS IN VICTORIA WITH SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME ASSOCIATION*.

Executive Director's Response

Murchison POW Camp is the principal place of its class in Victoria. Its association with the detention of POWs can be understood through the above ground and archaeological elements of the site, as well as through documentary sources. Murchison POW Camp operated as the primary facility for the detention of foreign military personnel in Victoria. Physical evidence remains on site such as the prisoner constructed fish pond. There are two memorials located within the extent of the camp, one erected by German POWs and the other by Italians. The Camp allows for the reality of life for POWs during this period to be understood. This is also evident through the documentary sources including sketches by Hans-Wolter von Gruenewaldt. This place demonstrates the experience of POWs in Victoria better than most other places with substantially the same association.

Criterion A is likely to be satisfied at the State level.

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

STEP 1: A BASIC TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION B

The place/object has a *clear ASSOCIATION* with an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life of importance in Victoria's cultural history.

Plus

The association of the place/object to the event, phase, etc *IS EVIDENT* in the physical fabric of the place/object and/or in documentary resources or oral history.

Plus

The place/object is *RARE OR UNCOMMON*, being one of a small number of places/objects remaining that demonstrates the important event, phase etc.

OR

The place/object is *RARE OR UNCOMMON*, containing unusual features of note that were not widely replicated

OR

The existence of the *class* of place/object that demonstrates the important event, phase etc is *ENDANGERED* to the point of rarity due to threats and pressures on such places/objects.

Executive Director's Response

The Murchison POW Camp was one of nineteen camps housing both internees and POWs established in Australia during the Second World War. In Victoria the largest concentration of POW and internee camps was in the Tatura area. Of a total of seven camps in this area, three exclusively housed Prisoners of War (Murchison, Dhurringile, Greytown). Murchison was purpose built and the largest POW camp in Victoria and Australia. The place is uncommon on these grounds. It also includes unique features, including gardens, tree plantings, and ornamental ponds constructed by the prisoners. These features were not widely replicated throughout Victoria in POW camps.

Criterion B is likely to be satisfied.

STEP 2: A BASIC TEST FOR DETERMINING STATE LEVEL SIGNIFICANCE FOR CRITERION B

The place/object is *RARE, UNCOMMON OR ENDANGERED* within Victoria.

Executive Director's Response

Murchison POW Camp is rare as a POW camp from the Second World War in Victoria.

Criterion B is likely to be satisfied at the State level.

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.

STEP 1: A BASIC TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION C

The:

- visible physical fabric; &/or
- documentary evidence; &/or
 - oral history,

relating to the place/object indicates a likelihood that the place/object contains *PHYSICAL EVIDENCE of historical interest that is NOT CURRENTLY VISIBLE OR UNDERSTOOD.*

Plus

From what we know of the place/object, the physical evidence is likely to be of an *INTEGRITY* and/or *CONDITION* that it *COULD YIELD INFORMATION* through detailed investigation.

Executive Director's Response

There is strong physical, documentary and oral history that indicates that there is likely to be archaeological evidence at Murchison POW Camp that relates to its Second World War occupation that is not currently visible or understood. The majority of buildings (a number of which were temporary) were removed following the closure of the camp. The surface has not been significantly disturbed since the place returned to farmlands, with minor grazing and ploughing activities occurring away from areas of archaeological sensitivity. Surface artefact scatters and extant ruins indicate a high likelihood of intact archaeological remains that would be able to yield information through detailed archaeological investigation.

Criterion C is likely to be satisfied.

STEP 2: A BASIC TEST FOR DETERMINING STATE LEVEL SIGNIFICANCE FOR CRITERION C

The knowledge that might be obtained through investigation is likely to *MEANINGFULLY CONTRIBUTE* to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.

Plus

The information likely to be yielded from the place/object is *not already well documented or readily available* from other sources.

Executive Director's Response

Murchison POW Camp has the potential to produce information about the day to day operations of Victoria's primary POW facility. The archaeological evidence is likely to meaningfully contribute to the understanding of the lives of prisoners and their guards. The information likely to be yielded through archaeological investigation, particularly regarding the lived experience at the camp, is not readily available from other sources.

Criterion C is likely to be satisfied at the State level.

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.

STEP 1: A BASIC TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION D

The place/object is one of a *CLASS* of places/objects that has a *clear ASSOCIATION* with an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, important person(s), custom or way of life in Victoria's history.

Plus

The *EVENT, PHASE, etc* is of *HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE*, having made a strong or influential contribution to Victoria.

Plus

The principal characteristics of the class are *EVIDENT* in the physical fabric of the place/object.

Executive Director's Response

Murchison POW Camp operated as a Prisoner of War Camp during WWII. It demonstrates a clear association with Second World War efforts on home soil. The establishment of the Prisoner of War Camp in Murchison was a significant action of the Australian Government during WWII and is of historical importance. This association is evident in the fabric of the place, including the sentry box, the cell block, the Kormoran memorial, and foundations of camp infrastructure.

Criterion D is likely to be satisfied.

STEP 2: A BASIC TEST FOR DETERMINING STATE LEVEL SIGNIFICANCE FOR CRITERION D

The place/object is a *NOTABLE EXAMPLE* of the class in Victoria (refer to Reference Tool D).

Executive Director's Response

Murchison POW Camp is not a notable example of this class on the basis that it has lost many of its principal characteristics through activity (Exclusion XD1). The removal of temporary structures which formed the majority of the camp's buildings during the war has reduced its intactness. The loss of principal characteristics means that while there is a high degree of subsurface archaeological potential, reading the landscape and its extant above ground structures requires interpretative assistance.

While there has been a loss of intactness, the Murchison POW Camp demonstrates the experience of POWs in Victoria better than most other places with substantially the same association, so it meets Criterion A rather than Criterion D.

Criterion D is not likely to be satisfied at the State level.

CRITERION E

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

STEP 1: A BASIC TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION E

The *PHYSICAL FABRIC* of the place/object clearly exhibits particular aesthetic characteristics.

Executive Director's Response

The Murchison POW Camp does not have any aesthetic qualities that exceed those of the general class to which the place belongs.

Criterion E is not likely to be satisfied.

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

STEP 1: A BASIC TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION F

The place/object contains *PHYSICAL EVIDENCE* that clearly demonstrates creative or technical *ACHIEVEMENT* for the time in which it was created.

Plus

The physical evidence demonstrates a *HIGH DEGREE OF INTEGRITY*.

Executive Director's Response

Murchison POW Camp was largely constructed of portable structures which have been removed. The majority of the non-portable structures that remain on site were constructed by Italian prisoners. These include the stone sentry box and main gateway piers. They do not represent creative or technical achievement for the time in which they were created.

Criterion F is not likely to be satisfied.

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to indigenous people as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.

STEP 1: A BASIC TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION G

Evidence exists of a *DIRECT ASSOCIATION* between the place/object and a *PARTICULAR COMMUNITY OR CULTURAL GROUP*.

(For the purpose of these guidelines, 'COMMUNITY or CULTURAL GROUP' is defined as a sizable group of persons who share a common and long-standing interest or identity).

Plus

The *ASSOCIATION* between the place/object and the community or cultural group is *STRONG OR SPECIAL*, as evidenced by the regular or long-term use of/engagement with the place/object or the enduring ceremonial, ritual, commemorative, spiritual or celebratory use of the place/object.

Executive Director's Response

Origins of physical association with the place

- There are former POWs and guards who had a direct association with this place in the past.
- The time of physical association between these people and the place was short (1941 to 1947).
- The intensity of physical association and social attachment to the place in the past is likely to have been strong.
- Some descendants of former POWs and guards may also have an association to this place through their familial experiences from the late 1940s onwards.

Present day physical and social attachment

Attachment of individuals

- The intensity of social attachment to the Camp experienced by former POWs and guards is likely to still be strong in the present day.
- The Camp has occasionally been visited by individual former POWs while travelling in Australia. The location on private land makes public accessibility difficult.
- Individuals who visit the place may experience a strong or special association.
- Visitation by individuals is not evidence of a strong or special association between a place and a community group.

Attachment of communities

- There is no evidence that former POWs, guards or descendants exist in an organised form in the present day.
- While there was a commonality of experience amongst former POWs and guards in the past, and an association with dependants, there are no *present-day communities* with strong or special associations with the place. The evidence for this is that there is:
 - there is no regular or long-term engagement with this place by communities with a potential association or attachment.
 - no enduring ceremonial, ritual, commemorative, spiritual or celebratory use of the place by communities with a potential association or attachment.

By contrast, the Tatura World War II Internment and POW Camps Collection (held at the Tatura Irrigation and Wartime Camps Museum) (VHR H2373) is a publicly accessible collection of over 1,700 objects relating to POW and internee experiences in the area. It is frequently visited by people with an association with this history. Surviving internees and POWs and their descendants have been visiting the museum and donating to the Collection since the Tatura Historical Society started to collect war camp material in the 1990s. This activity continues and indicates that the former internees share the Museum's view that this important part of Victoria's heritage be collected in one place close to the former camps; preserved and interpreted to the public.

Criterion G is not likely to be satisfied.

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

STEP 1: A BASIC TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION H

The place/object has a *DIRECT ASSOCIATION* with a person or group of persons who have made a strong or influential *CONTRIBUTION* to the course of Victoria's history.

Plus

The *ASSOCIATION* of the place/object to the person(s) *IS EVIDENT* in the physical fabric of the place/object and/or in documentary resources and/or oral history.

Plus

The *ASSOCIATION*:

- directly relates to *ACHIEVEMENTS* of the person(s) at, or relating to, the place/object; or
- relates to an *enduring* and/or *close INTERACTION* between the person(s) and the place/object.

Executive Director's Response

Murchison POW Camp is associated with Italian, German and Japanese POWs, and local Citizen Military Force reservists. The association with these groups and the place is evident in the fabric of the place, including plantings, gardens, and structures built by the prisoners. The association of these groups to the place directly relates to an enduring interaction with the place during the Second World War.

Criterion H is likely to be satisfied.

STEP 2: A BASIC TEST FOR DETERMINING STATE LEVEL SIGNIFICANCE FOR CRITERION H

The place/object allows the clear association with the person or group of persons to be *READILY APPRECIATED BETTER THAN MOST OTHER PLACES OR OBJECTS IN VICTORIA*.

Due to a loss of intactness, the landscape of the Murchison POW Camp is difficult to readily appreciate without interpretative aids. Furthermore the Camp is also located on private land which is not accessible. Other places and collections of objects which better allow the public appreciation of the association between POWs and the Murchison Camp include:

- The Tatura World War II Internment and POW Camps Collection (VHR H2373). This is a publicly accessible assemblage of approximately 1,700 heritage objects and archival materials made and used by internees and prisoners of war (POWs) in the seven World War II internment and POW camps in North Eastern Victoria.
- The German War Cemetery, Tatura (VHR H2347). The German War Cemetery, Tatura was the first foreign war cemetery to be established in Australia by the Australian War Graves Commission. It provided for the reburial of German internees and Prisoners of War who died whilst detained in Australia during World War I and II. It is a regularly visited public place and official commemoration services are held annually in November.

PERMIT POLICY

Preamble

The purpose of the Permit Policy is to assist when considering or making decisions regarding works to a registered place. It is recommended that any proposed works be discussed with an officer of Heritage Victoria prior to making a permit application. Discussing proposed works will assist in answering questions the owner may have and aid any decisions regarding works to the place.

The extent of registration of Murchison POW Camp in the Victorian Heritage Register affects the whole place shown on Diagram 2388 including the land, all buildings (exteriors and interiors), roads, trees, landscape elements and other features. Under the *Heritage Act 2017* a person must not remove or demolish, damage or despoil, develop or alter or excavate, relocate or disturb the position of any part of a registered place or object without approval. It is acknowledged, however, that alterations and other works may be required to keep places and objects in good repair and adapt them for use into the future.

If a person wishes to undertake works or activities in relation to a registered place or registered object, they must apply to the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria for a permit. The purpose of a permit is to enable appropriate change to a place and to effectively manage adverse impacts on the cultural heritage significance of a place as a consequence of change. If an owner is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that Heritage Victoria be contacted.

Permits are required for anything which alters the place or object, unless a **permit exemption** is granted. Permit exemptions usually cover routine maintenance and upkeep issues faced by owners as well as minor works or works to the elements of the place or object that are not significant. They may include appropriate works that are specified in a conservation management plan. Permit exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under s.38 of the Heritage Act) or after registration (under s.92 of the Heritage Act). It should be noted that the addition of new buildings to the registered place, as well as alterations to the interior and exterior of existing buildings requires a permit, unless a specific permit exemption is granted.

Conservation management plans

It is recommended that a Conservation Management Plan is developed to manage the place in a manner which respects its cultural heritage significance.

Aboriginal cultural heritage

If works are proposed which have the potential to disturb or have an impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage it is necessary to contact Aboriginal Victoria to ascertain any requirements under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*. If any Aboriginal cultural heritage is discovered or exposed at any time it is necessary to immediately contact Aboriginal Victoria to ascertain requirements under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

Other approvals

Please be aware that approval from other authorities (such as local government) may be required to undertake works.

Archaeology

Ground disturbance may affect the archaeological significance of the place and, subject to the exemptions stated in this document, requires a permit.

Cultural heritage significance

Overview of significance

The cultural heritage significance of Murchison POW Camp lies in its use as the primary Prisoner of War facility in Victoria during the Second World War. This is demonstrated in the ruinous above ground structures, archaeological features, deposits, plantings, and other elements in the landscape. The place is also of significance for its subsurface archaeological potential. All of the place is of cultural heritage significance. A permit is required for most works. See Permit Exemptions section for specific permit exempt activities.

PERMIT EXEMPTIONS (UNDER SECTION 38 OF THE HERITAGE ACT) It should be noted that Permit Exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under s.38 of the Heritage Act). Permit Exemptions can also be applied for and granted after registration (under s.92 of the Heritage Act).

General Condition 1

All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.

General Condition 2

Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible.

General Condition 3

All works should ideally be informed by Conservation Management Plans prepared for the place. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan, and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

General Condition 4

Nothing in this determination prevents the Heritage Council from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

General Condition 5

Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the relevant responsible authority, where applicable.

Specific Permit Exemptions

Landscape Exemptions

- The process of landscape maintenance, including mowing, disease and weed control, and maintenance to care for existing plants.
- The removal or pruning of dead or dangerous trees to maintain safety. If the tree is identified as being of primary or contributory cultural heritage significance, the Executive Director must be notified of these works within 21 days of them being undertaken.

Fire suppression activities

- Fire suppression and fire fighting duties provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits.
- Fire suppression activities such as fuel reduction burns, and fire control line construction, provided all significant historical and archaeological features are appropriately identified and protected.
- Fire management authorities should be aware of the location, extent and significance of historical and archaeological places when developing fire suppression and fire fighting strategies. The importance of places listed in the Heritage Register must be considered when strategies for fire suppression and management are being developed.

Signage

- Signage provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground structures or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Local Government Authority	City of Greater Shepparton
Heritage Overlay	Yes
Heritage Overlay Controls	External Paint: No Tree: No
Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register	No
Other Listings	No
Other Names	Camp 13 Murchison POW Camp 13

HISTORY

Establishment

In May 1941 the Australian Government agreed to accept Prisoners of War (POWs) from Middle East, and in May 1943 approved plans to accept further POWs from India. Over the course of the Second World War a total of 25,720 POWs were detained in Australia, including 18,432 Italian, 1,651 German, 5,637 Japanese. In this time Australian residents and overseas civilians were also detained. A total of 16,798 aliens were interned, of whom 8,921 were Australian residents. The remainder of the internees were held on behalf of other Allied Governments and included Italians, Germans and Japanese civilians.

During the Second World War there were nineteen camps throughout Australia housing POWs and civilian internees. Seven camps were established in North Central Victoria, and of these three housed POWs. Murchison was the largest POW camp in Victoria and Australia and was purpose built.

The Murchison POW Camp was established in 1941 by the Australian Government on pastoral land owned by the Hammond family. The detention of POWs in Australia was governed by the Geneva Conventions, which dictated that ranks were treated on the same basis as Australian garrison troops, and prisoners were provided with access to their national food and supplied equipment for boot making, tailoring, laundering, and haircutting.

The site for the camp was chosen because of its rural location, proximity to water, and access to a branch of the Shepparton railway line from Murchison East. Prisoners arrived by train and were marched from Hammond siding to the camp.

Construction of the camp

Prisoners were held in a twelve-sided complex divided by bisecting roads into four compounds – A, B, C & D. Each compound was encircled by two rows of barbed wire with coiled barb wire between. Elevated guard towers were manned by armed soldiers, with search lights patrolling the perimeter at night. The administration headquarters were situated on the east side of the prison complex and the guards' quarters on the western side. Two cell blocks were situated outside of the Prisoner Compound.

Each prison compound was built to a similar pattern. The wedge-shaped centres contained the amenity buildings - workshops, recreation halls, mess huts, kitchens, canteens, offices, laundries, communal showers and latrines. Prisoner accommodation was located near the outer perimeters of the compounds. The prisoners were initially housed in tents, and later built huts themselves - 20m x 6m timber framed buildings clad with galvanised iron. The camp had three sports fields. After the Cowra outbreak in August 1944, over a hundred Japanese prisoners were transferred to Murchison. In response security was increased and two concrete machine-gun emplacements were built.

The Prisoners at Murchison POW Camp constructed numerous structures and features. Italian prisoners constructed two stone gateway piers and a stone sentry box at the entrance to the administration headquarters. German prisoners constructed two memorials – one in Compound B (an Iron Cross on top of a stone cairn) in memory of battalion commander who fell in action at Tobruk; and the other, a stone cairn with iron cross and eagle, was constructed in Compound C by survivors of the Kormoran. This cairn was later relocated elsewhere in the camp, and was restored in 1995 by the German community.

The Italians erected a memorial (a stone cairn with Fascist cross and eagle) to their fallen comrades in Compound C which was taken down in 1968 and moved to the Italian Ossario (Australia's official Italian war cemetery) at Murchison. Prisoners also constructed garden plots in geometric shapes, ornamental wells, and a figure eight fish pond. When a former German POW visited his compound B in 1987, he found small Eucalypt trees he had planted in straight rows had grown in height to about 10 metres.

Operation of the camp

Behind the wire, the prisoners managed their own affairs. There were numerous escapes, shootings, a drowning, a knife murder, a hanging, lashings, attempted suicides, and an attempted massive Nazi outbreak. The latter incident occurred in mid-1942 and involved nearly 2,000 Nazis who intended to establish a second front in Australia for infiltration and sabotage. The escape failed after the discovery under a store hut of a 15ft shaft with a ladder descending to a 240 yards long tunnel lit by electricity.

German officers were transferred to Dhurringile and Italian officers to a new camp (Myrtleford Camp No. 5) built at Whorouly. In 1942, Camp 5 had 589 officer POWs and their orderlies in two compounds - Compound A holding Fascists and Compound B, was for the non-Fascists. Located on freehold land, current aerial photographs show there are still extant building slabs, exotic trees and a circular sewerage treatment plant.

Guarding duties were carried out by men drawn from local Citizen Military Force reservists. An article in the Shepparton Advertiser suggests that at least one Aboriginal man was involved in the guard force. On average, there was one guard to every five or so inmates, working around the clock, on shifts of two hours on and four hours off. The Australian authorities also placed great emphasis on rehabilitation rather than suppression. Prisoners were to encourage working parties, sports, hobbies and gardening in camps.

At the Murchison Camp, prisoners grew vegetables for their own and their guards' meals on irrigated land. The Geneva Convention prohibited the employment of prisoners in works associated with military operations or of a hazardous nature. Accordingly, prisoners were employed in forestry work, food production and the maintenance of transport infrastructure. A logging camp employing 250 Italian POWs, known as Camp No. 6, was established at nearby Graytown. In late 1943, Italy surrendered and joined the Allies. In March 1944, Italian POWs were fingerprinted before being released from camps throughout Australia for rural employment on farms, orchards and rice growing areas. Italian POWs worked over a large area of Victoria. Prisoners were driven to work on farms and returned to transit camps at night. They were given a midday meal and paid 1/3d per day. Many returned after the war and became naturalised citizens.

Winding up of the Camp

Germany surrendered on 7th May 1945 and Japan on 2nd September 1945. Japanese POWs were the first to leave in early 1946. On 21 January 1947, a shuttle service of trains to and from Hammond Siding took away 2,400 POWs and internees, mostly German, to board the Orantes leaving Port Melbourne for Germany. The German Afrika Corps Memorial in Compound B was demolished by the German POWs in 1947 when they were leaving the camp.

The camp was re-used to house contractors working on the Cattinach Canal. After this use, all the huts, mess halls and hospitals were moved away to be used in surrounding towns as dance halls, homes, sheds. The land was sold, returned to farm land, and today is subdivided into four blocks, with three different owners.

War Cemeteries for POWs

The importance of the area to Australia's war history is demonstrated through the creation of two of the nation's three foreign war cemeteries. The Italian War Cemetery (or Ossario) is at Murchison. Italian prisoners who died in Camp 13 now lie in the Murchison Ossario. Camp deaths include Italian prisoner No. 47037, Capitano Antonio Colletti and Carmelo Caraccioli. The Italian memorial erected in POW Compound C moved to the Ossario in 1969. Its rebuilding was done with changes - the original Fascist Cross was replaced with a map of Italy and the Fascist Eagle with a more neutral ornament.

The German War cemetery (VHR H2347) is located at Tatura. German prisoners who died in Camp 13 were initially buried in the Murchison cemetery, but later the burials were relocated to the Tatura German War Cemetery. Deaths at Camp 13 included Obergefreiter Tobias Tschurtschenthaler who was shot by a guard, and two suicides Obergefreiter Adolf Heintz and Feldwebel Johannes Haubold.

VICTORIAN HISTORICAL THEMES

07 Governing Victorians

7.4 Defending Victoria and Australia

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Murchison POW Camp is a large and complex place. The camp covers parts or the whole of four different parcels of land and one road reserve.

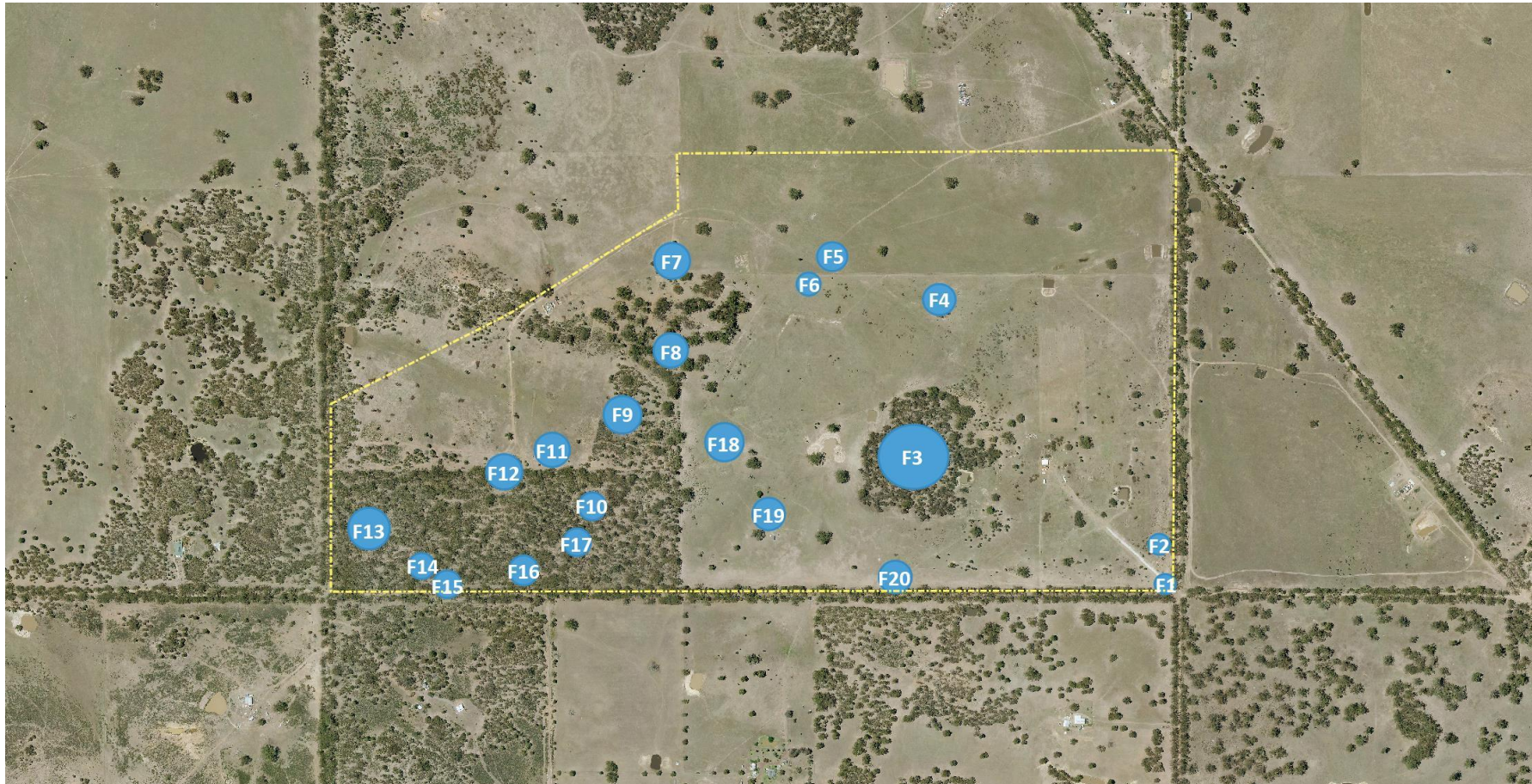
The following physical remains are found on each of the five parcels:

- 1) 2LP113159: part of Compound B, and Compounds C & D and administration headquarters, and contains eight listed features – F1, F2, F3, F4, F6, F7, F18, F19
- 2) 4PS439182: northern prison cell block, one listed feature - F5
- 3) 1PS439182: sections of Compounds A and B, and contains 5 listed features –F8, F9, F11 & F12
- 4) 1LP113159: part of Compound A & D and Guards Quarters and contains five listed features - F10, F13, F14, F15, F16 & F17
- 5) Wet Land road reserve: rubble of concrete machine gun placement with one listed feature - F20

See next page for a plan of main features.

PLAN OF MAIN FEATURES

Due to the size and complexity of this place and the presence of subsurface archaeological deposits, this 'Plan of Features' has been prepared to assist in understanding the location of the main historical elements. This plan is for orientation purposes only and does not denote levels of cultural heritage significance. **See next page for list of main features.**



Name: Murchison Prisoner of War Camp

Hermes Number: 5592

LIST OF MAIN FEATURES

- F1. Administration Headquarters: two stone gateway piers
- F2. Administration headquarters: small stone built sentry box
- F3. Adjacent to Compound C: copse of native trees
- F4. Near Compound C: water treatment plant comprising concrete ponds and machine foundations
- F5. Adjacent to northern end of compounds B & C: northern cell block, concrete with two rows of ten cells
- F6. Between northern cell block and north end of compounds B & C: Ornamental pond with pipe, all decorations have been removed
- F7. Compound B: rows of planted sugar gums
- F8. Compound B: concrete footings and floor slabs associated with amenity buildings, also remains of garden plantings in the form of cacti
- F9. Compound A: concrete footings and floor slabs associated with amenity buildings, also remains of garden plantings in the form of cacti
- F10. Compound A: garden beds and cacti
- F11. Kormoran memorial - stone structure with pronounced pointing and iron cross
- F12. Concrete machine gun emplacement (one to two metres from the edge of the property)
- F13. Guards Quarters: concrete footings and floor slabs, and stone steps
- F14. Guards Quarters: circular well
- F15. Guards Quarters: figure eight ornamental pond (10 metres from the edge of the property)
- F16. Guards Quarters: large dam and tramway
- F17. Guards Quarters: southern cell block, concrete with two rows of ten cells, with solid iron gate
- F18. Compound D: traces of concrete foundations
- F.19 Compound D: Italian memorial and plantings – pair of small obelisks with concrete surrounds, remnants of garden beds and lone Cypress pine, all enclosed by post and wire fence
- F.20 Wet Lane road reserve - Ruins of concrete machine gun emplacement

INTERIORS

The interior of the stone sentry box (F2) contains some graffiti, in the form of dates and some initials. There also appears to be an initial engraved on one of the stone gateway piers (F1). The interior of one of the cells in the southern cell block (F17) may still retain the following graffiti recorded by a visiting former POW. Wandering through the Camp, an ex-POW found written on the wall of one of the cells in German the words 'Humor ist wegn man trotsdem lacht' – Humour is when one laughs in spite of it all.

LANDSCAPES, TREES & GARDENS

Trees: Sugar gums planted (F7) by POWs survive as mature trees.

Gardens: Extant garden plantings from the POW era survive mainly in the form of clumps of prickly pears and cacti (F10 and F8)

ARCHAEOLOGY

Murchison POW Camp is significant for its high potential to contain archaeological remains, features, deposits and artefact scatters relating to the operation of the camp. The surface has not been significantly disturbed since the place has been returned to farmlands, although minor grazing and ploughing activities occurring away from areas of high archaeological sensitivity. Valuable information is likely to be yielded through archaeological investigation about the day-to-day lives of the prisoners and their guards; construction and phases of the buildings; and the operations of the camp. This information is not readily available from other sources. There is a potentially a substantial body of archaeological evidence at Murchison that would enable it, as part of a national body of

evidence, to more comprehensively demonstrate the POW experience of WWII in Victoria and Australia.

INTEGRITY/INTACTNESS

Intactness – The overall intactness of the camp (ie: what remains at the place above ground) is poor to fair. The majority of structures used during the Prisoner of War Camp phase were removed to nearby townships. Individual features that remain at the site with good intactness include the stone gateway piers, stone sentry box, sugar gum plantings, and Kormoran memorial. (April 2017).

Integrity – The overall integrity of the camp (ie: the ‘readability’ of the whole place) is poor to fair. It can be difficult to easily read the place for its cultural heritage values with interpretation aids, such as historical photos, diagrams or a guide. (April 2017).

CONDITION

The place is in fair condition. There are few surviving above ground structures. There has been minimal disturbance to the place since it finished operating as a POW camp. Minor grazing and ploughing activities occurring away from areas of high archaeological sensitivity has affected the condition of some elements at the site. (April 2017).

COMPARISONS

Comparison – Prisoner of War & Internment Camps in the VHR

Dhurringile (VHR H1554), Dhurringile (near Murchison), Greater Shepparton City



Dhurringile (VHR H1554)

Dhurringile is a two-storeyed brick residence and gatehouse, brick stables and timber shearing shed that was constructed by James Winter in 1876-77. In 1941, it was taken up by the army for use as a Prisoner of War Camp for Germans captured in the Middle East. The Murchison POW Camp consisted of five compounds including the Dhurringile homestead which was intended for German officers who were to be given more favourable treatment than other ranks. In July 1945, the German prisoners were transferred to other sites and at the end of the war, the site was cleared of huts and all other military buildings.

Number One Internment Camp (VHR H2048) Dhurringile (near Murchison), Greater Shepparton City



Number One Internment Camp (VHR H2048)

The Number One Internment Camp is included in the VHR as a heritage place and an archaeological place. It is located on the eastern side of Waranga Reservoir, 20 kms south of Tatura. It was Australia's first purpose built internment camp for housing enemy aliens. It was established in 1940 and was closed in 1947. The camp housed male civilian internees, first of German origin and later of Italian origin who had been resident in Australia. The camp is an archaeological site of high potential with most of its features such as huts, ablution blocks, kitchens, tennis courts, gardens, ponds, skittle alley, café, hall, sewerage works and security fencing easily readable.

Comparison – Prisoner of War Camps in the Victorian Heritage Inventory (for Archaeological Places)

Kinglake West POW Camp, Broadford Number 3 Camp (VHI H7923-0037)

Not included in the VHR.

The Kinglake West POW Camp is an archaeological site. It was constructed to house Italian POW who performing timber getting activities. It was the biggest of the Broadford Camps, and could house 150 POWs. It was a low security camp, with no security fences. This place once had a good level of intactness, and many original structures remained on site. However these were destroyed in the 2009 Black Saturday Bushfires. Little to no fabric remains.

Comparison – Places associated with Murchison POW Camp

Tatura World War 2 Internment and POW Camps Collection (VHR H2373)

The Tatura World War II Internment and POW Camps Collection consists of approximately 1,700 heritage objects and archival materials made and used by internees and prisoners of war in the seven World War II internment camps at Tatura.

German War Cemetery, Tatura (VHR H2347)

The German War Cemetery, Tatura was the first foreign war cemetery to be established in Australia by the Australian War Graves Commission. Established after World War II on land excised from the Tatura Cemetery, it provided for the reburial of German internees and Prisoners of War who died whilst detained in Australia during World War I and II.

Discussion

Murchison POW Camp was Victoria's principal and largest POW camp during the Second World War. Although it has lost some of its above ground fabric, it is the best extant example of a Prisoner of War facility in Victoria. HM Prison Dhurringile retains little to no evidence of its history as a POW facility. Number One Internment Camp Tatura (like some other civilian internee camps) did not house Prisoners of War. Little to no fabric remains at the Kinglake West POW Camp. The Tatura Collection and German War Cemetery demonstrate associations with the detention of POWs during WWII, but do not demonstrate the form and fabric of camps. While there are several places within Victoria that are associated with the state's history of POW internment during the Second World War. Murchison POW Camp demonstrates this history better than other extant places.

KEY REFERENCES USED TO PREPARE ASSESSMENT

Joyce Hammond, *Walls of Wire Tatura*, Rushworth, Murchison, 1990

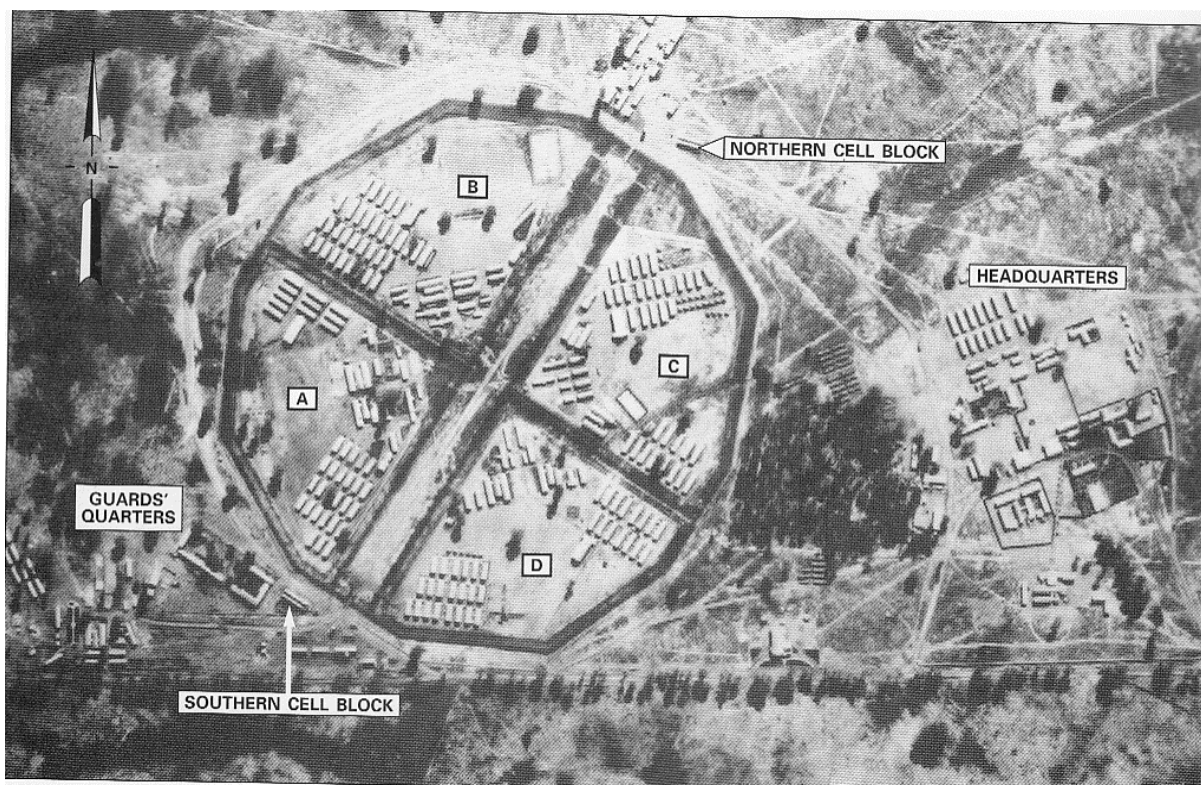
David Mitchelhill-Green, *POW Camp No. 13 at Murchison*

Arthur Knee, Notes prepared for a Heritage Council inspection

TEXT FOR THE BLUE HERITAGE PLAQUE

Built in 1941, the Murchison POW Camp was the largest POW camp in Australia during the Second World War. It is historically and archaeologically significant as a place which provides insight into the experiences of the over 3,000 prisoners who were detained here.

ADDITIONAL IMAGES



1949 aerial photograph



1949 aerial overlaid on modern aerial photograph

Name: Murchison Prisoner of War Camp
Hermes Number: 5592



Water treatment plant, F.4



Ornamental Pond and northern goal, F.6 & F.5



Sugar gums planted by prisoners, F.7 (2017)



Italian memorial, F.19 (2017)



Kormoran memorial, F.11 (2017)



Machine gun emplacement, F.12 (2017)



Steps, Guards' Quarters, F.13 (2017)



Concrete floor slabs, F8 (2017)



Collapsed latrine pits, F.8 (2017)



Southern Goal, F.17 (2017)

Name: Murchison Prisoner of War Camp
Hermes Number: 5592



Figure eight pond, F.15 (2017)



Gateway piers, F.1 (2017)



Sentry box, F.2 (2017)

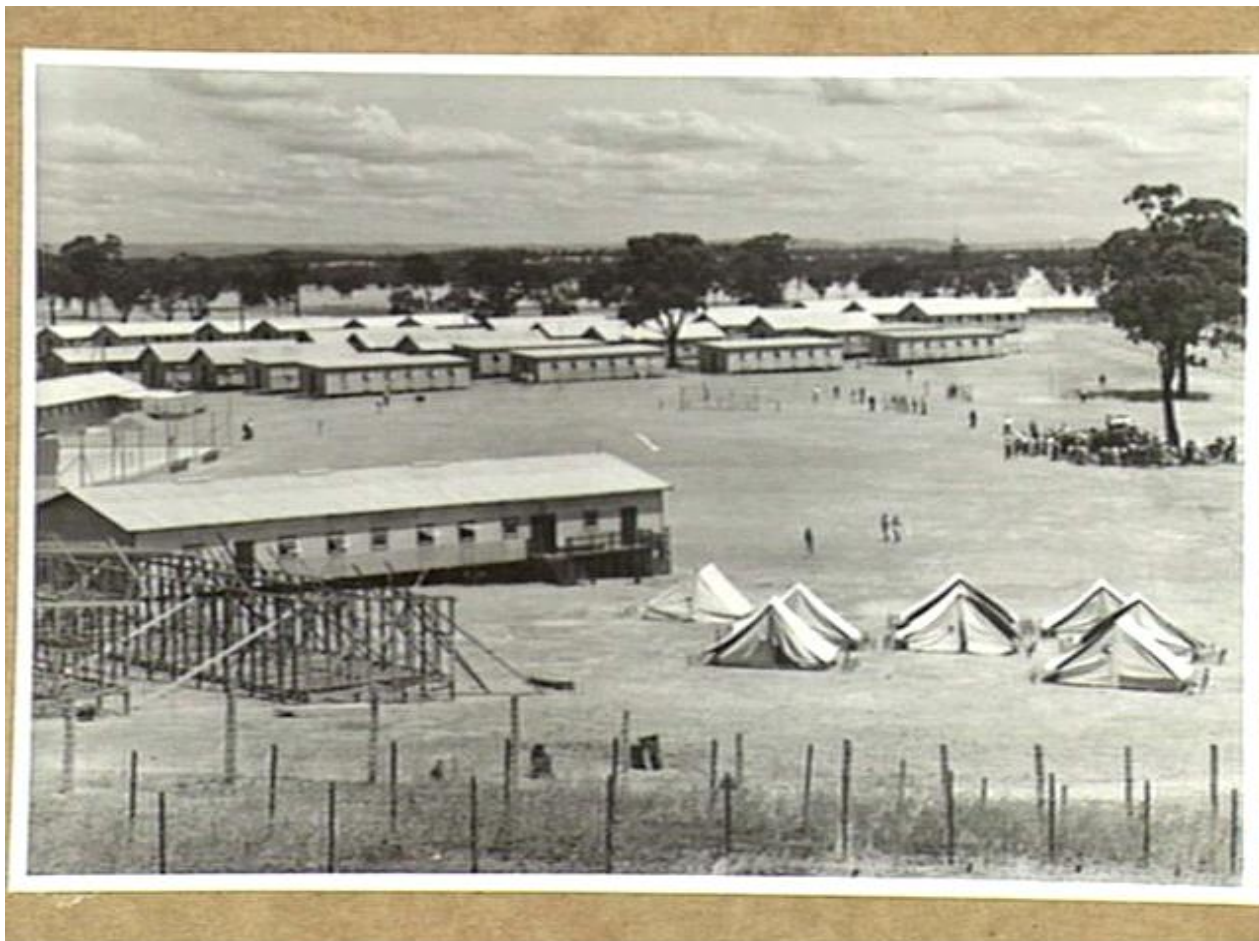
Name: Murchison Prisoner of War Camp
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Graffiti, sentry box, F.2 (2017)



Italian memorial relocated from Camp 13



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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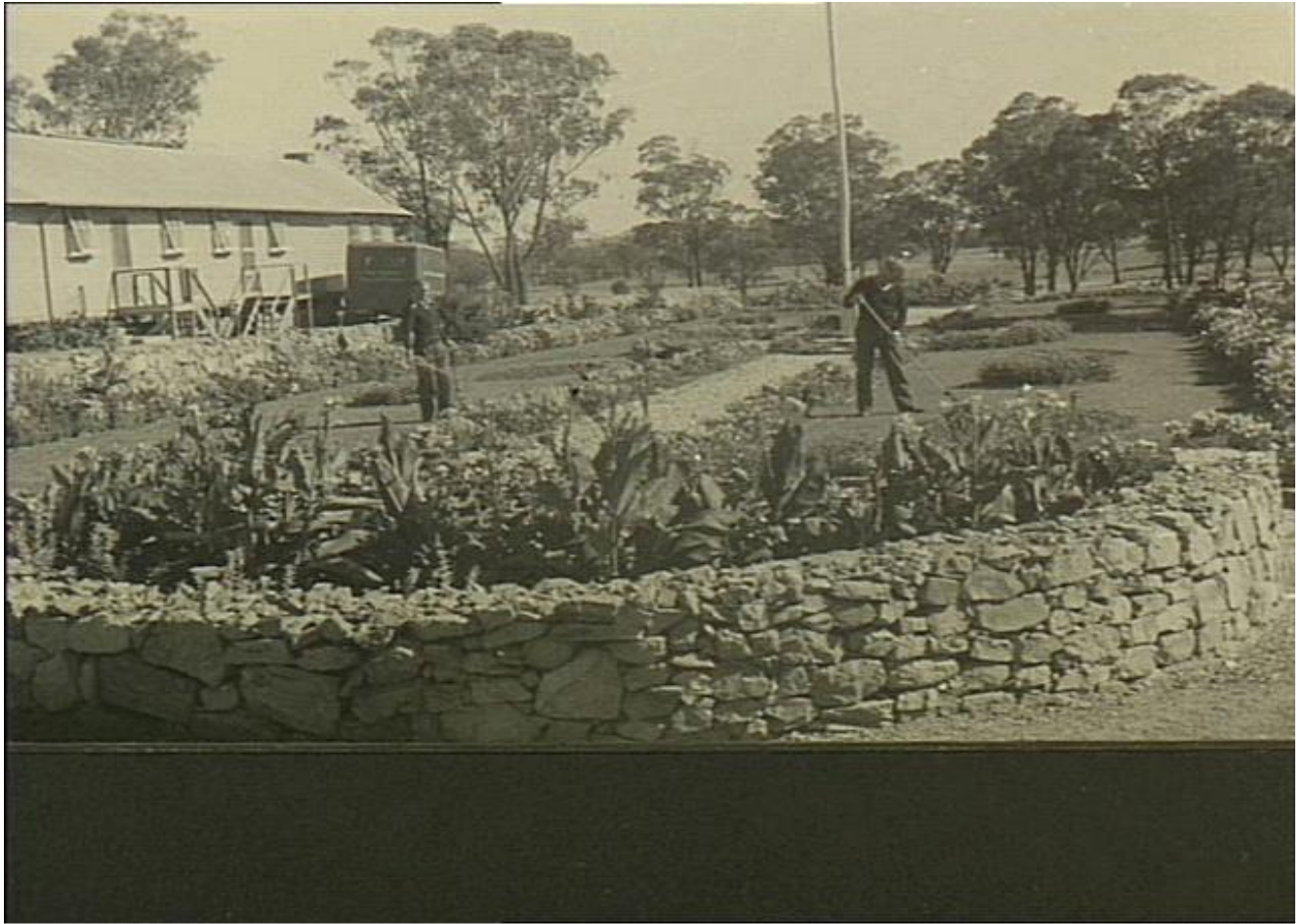
Murchison POW Camp (source: Australian War Memorial)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

028602

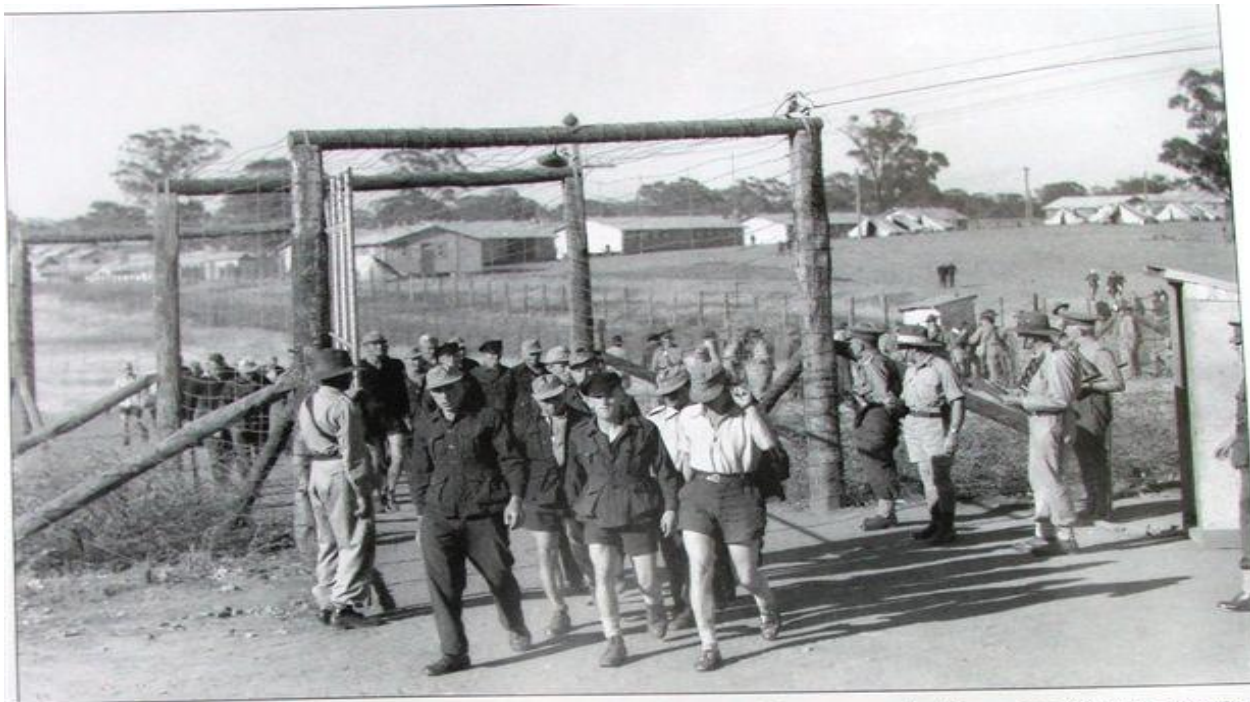
Recreation Hall, later relocated to Murchison, known as ANZAC Hall - Murchison POW Camp (source: Australian War Memorial)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

030227/14

Two prisoners working in flower garden, Murchison POW Camp (source: Australian War Memorial)



From April 1941 to January 1947, the Australian town of Murchison, 165 kilometres north of Melbourne in the state of Victoria, was home to Australian Prisoner of War Camp No. 13. Built to accommodate 4,000 inmates, the camp in time came to house some 2,100 Italian, 1,300 German and, from August 1944, 185 Japanese prisoners, while another several hundred

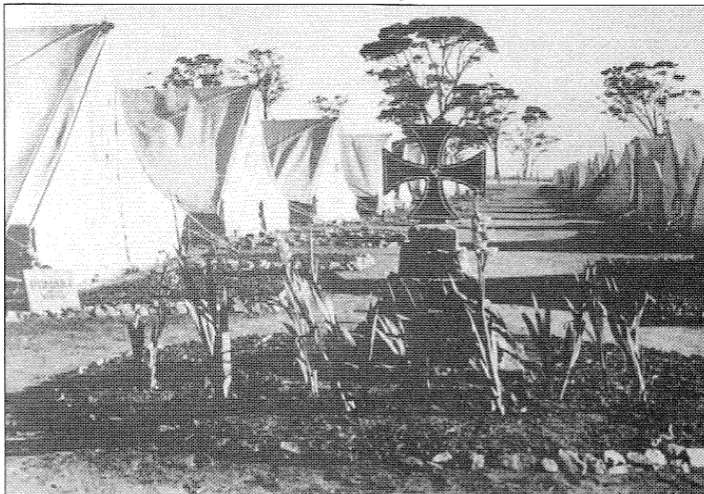
Italians and Germans worked in various affiliated outstations. Here a working party of German POWs leaves the camp on an outside labour detail. Work tasks for the prisoners could entail timber cutting, road-making, quarrying, pig farming or market gardening. The party is marching out through the north-eastern gate and the compound in the background is 13B.

POW CAMP No. 13 AT MURCHISON

Party of prisoner marching out through the north-eastern gate, the compound in the background is 13B

Right: The prisoners were allowed to erect monuments in their compounds. This is the memorial for Oberst Gustav Ponath, erected in Compound 13D by the men of Heeres-MG-Bataillon 8 in honour of their battalion commander who fell in action at Tobruk on April 14, 1941. The day before, April 13, he had been awarded the Ritterkreuz.

Morel found the Germans' bearing 'remarkable'. He recorded 'all movements to and from the assembly point executed with strict military precision, songs being sung on the march, and every order issued in connection with their work obeyed in a thoroughly military manner'. They were, in his opinion, 'a splendid body of men. They have not allowed their morale to drift at all. Their appearance on parade, even in working dress, is a delight to a soldier's heart'. Curious Australian guards noted their 'German flair for rustic woodwork' as wooden signs appeared between the rows of tents. The men of Heeres-MG-Bataillon 8 (a unit of the 5. leichte Division of the Afrikakorps) promptly erected a memorial in 13D in the form of an Iron Cross on top of a stone cairn to their fallen commanding officer and posthumous Ritterkreuz holder, Oberstleutnant Gustav Ponath, killed in action at Tobruk on April 14, 1941.



STALAG AUSTRALIA



TATURA AND DISTRICT MUSEUM

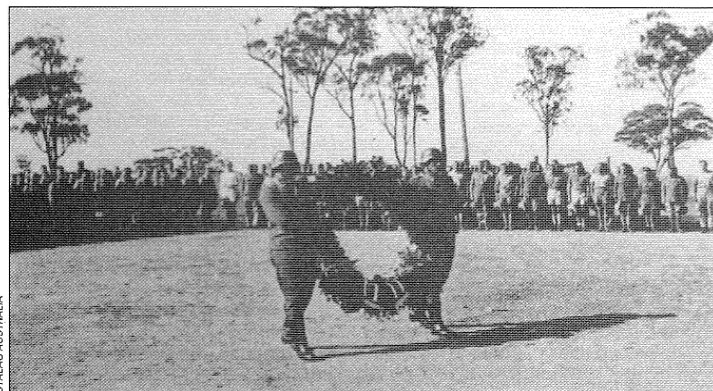
The crew of the German raider *Kormoran* erected this memorial in Compound 13C to commemorate their 80 comrades lost when their ship sank after its victorious encounter with HMAS *Sydney* on November 19, 1941 (see *After the Battle* No. 141). Two metres high and with an Iron Cross on top, it was inscribed with the words 'Unseren gefallenen Kameraden' (To our Fallen Comrades). This group shot of *Kormoran* crew members posing at the memorial was taken in 1942.

ARRIVAL OF THE KOMORAN CREW

Camp No. 13 received an influx of German naval prisoners in late 1941 following the sinking of the Australian cruiser HMAS *Sydney* by Germany's largest Hilfskreuzer (auxiliary cruiser) HSK *Kormoran*. Having already sunk several Allied merchant ships in the Indian Ocean, the German raider, under Fregattenkapitän Theodor Detmers, was sighted by the Australian cruiser off the Western Australian coast on November 19. As *Sydney* changed course to intercept the mystery merchantman, Detmers broadcast a distress call in the name of the Dutch merchantman *Straat Malakka*. *Kormoran's* innocent guise and cunning ploy worked. *Sydney* continued to close. Running up the Nazi flag and opening fire, Detmers' crew quickly scored numerous hits against *Sydney*, which sunk with the loss of all hands (see *After the Battle* No. 141).

With their ship ablaze, the Germans were forced to scuttle her and take to the lifeboats. Of the raider's 395 crewmembers, 315 were picked up by ships in the area or made landfall on the West Australian coast. The remainder had either been killed in the battle or drowned when an overloaded raft capsized. Following interrogation, arrangements were made to transport the German officers and men across the country to Camp No. 13. Detmers reached Murchison on December 21 where, as senior officer, he became camp leader in place of Luftwaffe Major Hellmut Bertram (who bore the dubious honour of being the first German officer captured in North Africa after his aircraft was shot down). The German sailors, together with fellow merchant seamen from 13D, were assigned to the previously unoccupied Compound C.

With its ranks swelling, by the end of 1941 Camp No. 13 (including Dhurringile) held 2,464 prisoners: 90 German officers and 1,282 ORs; 543 Italian officers and 549 ORs. On January 5, 1942, the remaining 134 crewmen from the *Kormoran* arrived under escort. Their health was noted to be good, having 'recovered completely from the privations suffered before their rescue from the lifeboats'. An 'impressive' ceremony was held inside 13C on March 15 — Helden-



STALAG AUSTRALIA

Left: The memorial was unveiled during a ceremony held inside 13C on March 15, 1942 — Heldengedenktag, the Third Reich's Heroes Remembrance Day.

Memorial for Oberst Gustav Ponath, erected in Compound 13B

Name: Murchison Prisoner of War Camp
Hermes Number: 5592



Environment,
Land, Water
and Planning



Murchison, Victoria. 1944-05-06. A panoramic view of No. 13 Prisoner of War Camp Murchison POW Camp (source: Australian War Memorial 03022)



Murchison, Victoria. 1944-05-06. A panoramic view of Murchison POW Camp (source: Australian War Memorial 034004)



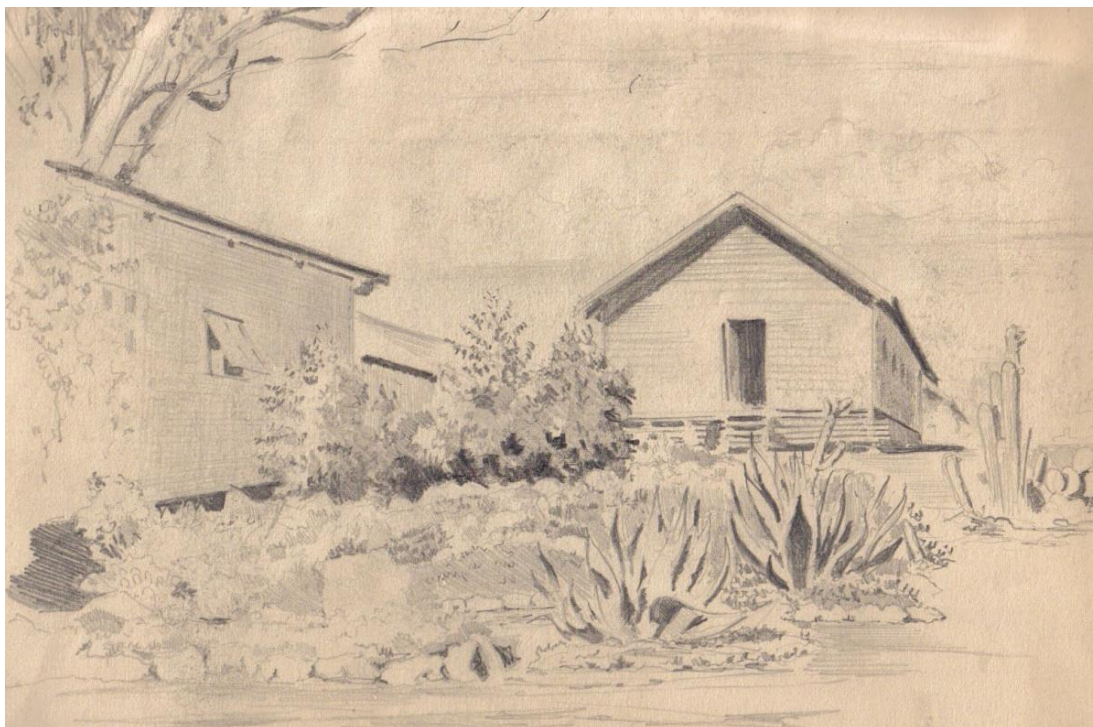
Murchison, Victoria. 1944-05-06. A panoramic view of Murchison POW Camp (source: Australian War Memorial 034009)



Murchison, Victoria. 1944-05-06. A panoramic view of Murchison POW Camp (source: Australian War Memorial 03012)



Murchison, Victoria. 1944-05-06. A panoramic view of Murchison POW Camp (source: Australian War Memorial 034011)



Sketches by Hans-Wolter von Gruenewaldt, a German Prisoner of War who was held in Camp 13 for 5½ years.