

Name of the event	<b>Visit of the former concentration camp of Mauthausen by the International Summer Semester</b>
Institution, which organised the event	<b>Theresan Military Academy</b>
Country of the organiser	<b>Austria</b>
Year of the event	<b>2022</b>
Date of the event (from-to)	<b>22 March 2022</b>
Name(s) of the author(s)	<b>Amelie HOFER / Trainee of International Office</b>
Authors' institution	<b>Theresan Military Academy</b>
Authors' country	<b>Austria</b>

The former concentration camp of Mauthausen: One of the many scenes of the Holocaust. More than 100,000 people were victims to the ethnic cleansing carried out by the National Socialists there. Upon entering the memorial silence spread among the students of the international summer semester (coming from Bulgaria, Greece, Poland, Romania, and Sweden) who visited the memorial on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022.



Participants of the international semester in front of the former Nazi-concentration camp Mauthausen.

Photo: Theresan Military Academy.

The guided tour did not start with the prisoners' area but with the accommodation of former Nazi-officers, who did not only work but

also live there with their families. There was a soccer field, where games took place at the weekend while the prisoners suffered the unimaginable behind the walls. The guide even showed a picture of a wedding that took place here – hard to comprehend. Right next to the soccer field there was the camp for the sick, where the ill prisoners were left to die.

The tour continued and lead to the quarry and the so-called "*stairs of death*". The prisoners had to carry blocks of stone up the steps for hours every day. On a photo – taken by the official photographer of the camp – the line of people looked orderly. The prisoners were herded up the stairs, were beaten when they collapsed, and consequently many died. The prisoners who committed suicide by throwing themselves down the wall or were pushed by guards, were called "parachutists" by the Nazis. It is hard to believe that only few hundred

metres away were houses, whose inhabitants witnessed inactively the atrocities in the camp.

In front of the entrance gate numerous monuments were erected in memory of the many victims from the different countries. We stopped a while there, between of all the monuments. The four cadets from Poland brought flowers and laid them silently at their country's monument.

Then we entered the camp through the entrance gate. The guide showed us the laundry barracks, where the new arrived prisoners were disinfected, showered and they got shaved, after they had to hand in everything they were carrying.

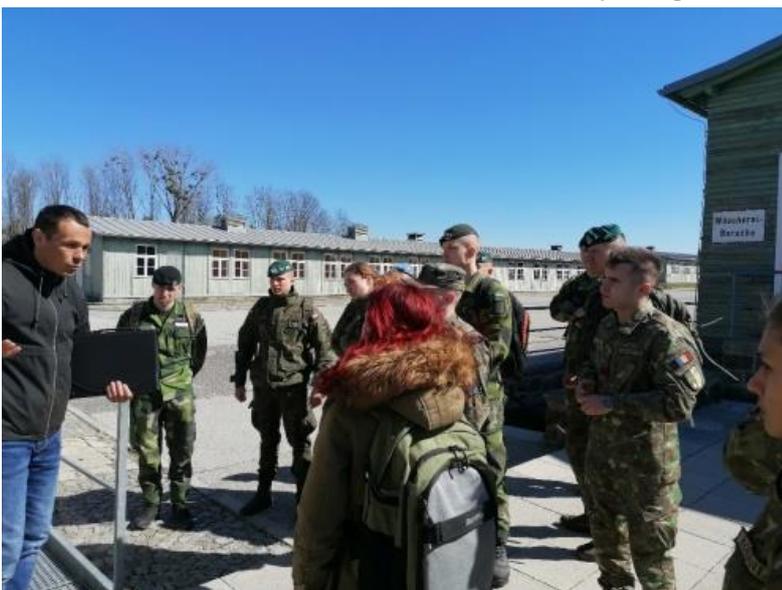
The accommodation barracks were completely overcrowded. Today they are empty, only photos give the visitor an idea what it looked like. In front of the barracks roll calls were held twice a day. If one prisoner was missing, everyone had to wait until he or she was found again, even if it took hours.

The tour ended in the basement of the former infirmary. It was the place, where those who were too weak, too old, or too young to work



Polish cadets in memoriam of Polish victims.

Photo: Theresan Military Academy.



Guided tour in the former Nazi-concentration camp Mauthausen.

Photo: Theresan Military Academy.

were killed immediately after their arrival, which were the gas chambers. Afterwards the bodies were burnt in the crematorium. The wall of the crematorium is covered with memorial plaques of the victim's dependants. Affected and in silence the students were walking through the rooms. After we left the premises, you could feel consternation among the group. Everyone had the same thought: **Such atrocities must never happen again!**