

International Memorial

at the Dachau Concentration Camp

Station 13

Known only as the International Monument, this sculpture by Nandor Glid was dedicated in September 1968 to commemorate those who suffered and died at the Dachau Concentration Camp in Germany.



The sculpture is made of dark bronze. It features short strands of barbed wire on which skeletons are hanging with their heads dangling sharply. From below, you can see that the sculpture is not flat, but has a depth of about four feet. Notice the hands of the skeletons which resemble the barbs on a barbed wire fence. On either side of the sculpture are concrete fence posts which closely resemble the ones actually used to support the barbed wire fence around the camp. Underneath the sculpture are the dates 1933 - 1945, the years that the camp was used as a concentration camp for anti-Nazis.





standing cells

Dachau was the first of the Nazi concentration camps opened in Germany and was also considered one of the most brutal. Prisoners included Jews, Poles, Russians, Ukrainians, French, Yugoslavs, Czechs, Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, Italians, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, communists, and Gypsies. Prisoners lived in constant fear of brutal treatment including standing cells, floggings, pole hanging, and standing at attention for extremely long periods. There were 32,000 documented deaths at the camp, but it is estimated that at least 188,000 died there between 1933 and 1945.



a sculpture of a man being "pole hanged"

In 1959, a competition for a commemorative monument to be placed at Dachau was held. Nandor Glid, a Yugoslavian (present day Bosnia), had been held with his family at Auschwitz during the war but escaped to fight with the resistance in Yugoslavia. Glid, at this point an artist, submitted his design and ultimately won the competition.

Glid created the piece and it was dedicated at the museum's entrance in 1968 where it still stands today. The sculpture is approximately 48 feet wide and 19 feet tall. It symbolizes the emaciated bodies of the prisoners who died of starvation and disease in the camp. The piece includes references to the fence posts and barbed wire that were installed around the camp. The human skeletons not only commemorates those who were killed but those, who in an act of desperation, jumped into the barbed wire fence.

The sculpture is located directly in front of the former service building, which is now a museum. When the camp was in operation, the building had these words painted on the roof: "There is one road to freedom. Its milestones are: Obedience, Diligence, Honesty, Orderliness, Cleanliness, Sobriety, Truthfulness, Self-Sacrifice, and Love of the Fatherland." This Nazi slogan has long since been removed but the design of the International Monument is the exact opposite of what the Nazis were saying, and as such, it represents a protest against the Nazi regime.

To reach the monument, one has to walk down a pathway made of granite slabs that are meant to remember the prisoners' hard work in the quarries of the Flossenbürg and Mauthausen concentration camps. The downward slope into the sunken space is meant to call to mind the suffering and death of the prisoners. At the lowest point there is a site for placing wreaths.



As one climbs back up the slope, a new sculpture emerges, a bas relief depicting three links of a chain held together by bars in between. This signifies the unity among the prisoners. On the links are enameled triangles in the colors of the cloth badges worn by the prisoners on their uniforms to identify their prisoner classification.



A bar over the top of the triangle meant that an inmate was a second-timer, or a prisoner who had served time in the camp, been released, and had then been arrested again; the second time they would be in the punishment block and would be treated more harshly.

The circles in the sculpture represent the circles that were worn below the triangle by prisoners who were assigned to the camp penal colony. These prisoners were assigned to the hardest work in the camps, usually to the rock quarries or the gravel pits.



A third shrine exists behind one of the buildings on the east side where a short wall displays the words "Never Again" in five different languages. In front of the wall is a box of ashes of the victims of the Dachau concentration camp. The ashes were found in red clay urns when Dachau was liberated.

