



Hamburg / Bad Arolsen,
September 30, 2025
Page 1/2

Ring Confiscated by Nazis Returned to Family Relatives Travel to Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial to Receive Keepsake in Person

On September 27, 2025, a poignant event took place at the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial, when a ring belonging to Czesław Drozdzyński, a former inmate of Neuengamme concentration camp, was returned to his nephew Michel Drozdzyński, who was accompanied by his wife and his sister. The family had traveled from Belgium specifically for the occasion, and at their request, the ring was handed over to them in person at the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial. The restitution was made possible through the Arolsen Archives' #StolenMemory initiative, which seeks to return the personal belongings of victims of Nazi persecution to their relatives.

#StolenMemory

Wristwatches and wedding rings, letters and photos – the Nazis confiscated all their prisoners' personal belongings in the concentration camps.

The Arolsen Archives still hold around 2,000 objects that are waiting to be returned to the descendants of their owners. One of the many volunteers from across the world involved in the initiative managed to locate the family of Czesław Drozdzyński.

The Story of Czesław Drozdzyński

The event began with a surprise for the staff of the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial and the Arolsen Archives: The family possess extensive documentation related to Czesław Drozdzyński's life. The Drozdzyński family brought numerous photographs and documents with them, including work passes, a bonus voucher from the Neuengamme concentration camp, and records attesting to his involvement in various resistance groups. The centerpiece of the collection is a detailed report on his detention and liberation, handwritten by Czesław in May 1945, shortly after he returned home. For the family, for the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial, and for the Arolsen Archives, this eyewitness account is an important source of knowledge about what happened to Czesław Drozdzyński.

Czesław Drozdzyński was born on July 20, 1922, in Chorzemin, Poland. He emigrated with his parents to Waterschei in the Limburg province of Belgium after his father found work in the local coal mine. He studied there, changed his first name to César, and eventually got involved in the resistance against the German occupiers. On August 2, 1944, he was arrested and interned at Hasselt prison. He was deported from the Breendonk police detention camp to Neuengamme concentration camp on September 2, 1944. Towards the end of the war, César/Czesław was sent on an evacuation march to the Wöbelin sub-camp near Ludwigslust, where British and American troops liberated him on

Page 2/2

May 2, 1945. When César/Czesław arrived back in his home town of Waterschei on May 18, 1945, he was gravely ill. He stayed at the Lembeek Repatriation Center from July 20 to September 4, 1945, but sadly passed away only shortly afterwards in his hometown on October 14, 1945.

Last year, #StolenMemory volunteer Yarden Lenga managed to track down Czesław Drozdzyński's nephew in Belgium.

Press photos are available [here](#).

About the Arolsen Archives

The Arolsen Archives are the world's largest archive on the victims and survivors of Nazi persecution. The collection has information on about 17.5 million people and belongs to UNESCO's Memory of the World. It contains documents on the various victim groups targeted by the Nazi regime and is an important source of knowledge for society today.

arolsen-archives.org/en

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The Arolsen Archives on Social Media

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About the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial

The Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial is located in the south-east of Hamburg and commemorates more than 100,000 people from all over Europe who were held in Neuengamme concentration camp. Neuengamme concentration camp was the largest concentration camp in northwest Germany. More than 42,000 prisoners did not survive their imprisonment.

<https://www.kz-gedenkstaette-neuengamme.de/en/>

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