

# [The located in itter, a village in](https://assignbuster.com/the-located-in-itter-a-village-in/)

The Battle for Castle Itter was oneof the final battles of World War 2, taking place on the 5th of May, 1945, only five days after Hitler’s suicide and two days before the official surrenderof Nazi Germany. Castle Itter (Schloss Itter) was a small 19th-century AustrianCastle located in Itter, a village in the state of Tyrol; which later became aprison for French VIPs in the second world war.

Probably the most interestingpart of the battle would easily be the participants that fought in it; namelythe fact that it is one of, if not the only, battle where both American andGerman soldiers fought alongside each other.            The allied side of the battleconsisted of a grand total of somewhere around 45 people, about nine or so beingformer French prisoners, sixteen United States infantry under the command ofCaptain John C. Lee, Jr and Lieutenant Harry Basse, eleven Wehrmacht Heersoldiers under the command of Major Josef Gangl and a Waffen SS Hauptsturmführer, Kurt-Siegfried Schrader, as well as one M4A3E8 Sherman. Opposing them is anestimate of about 150 to 200 Waffen SS under the command of HauptsturmführerSebastian Wimmer as well as two 2 cm Flak 30, and a single Flak 41 88mm. Theallied side received reinforcements after about twelve to sixteen hours afterthe battle began, said reinforcements consisting of approximately two moreWehrmacht Heer Soldiers, 3 additional M4 Shermans, a single member of theAustrian resistance, and other reinforcements from the United States 104thInfantry Division. By the end of the battle, only a handful of Wehrmacht and UStroops were killed in the battle, as well as the M4A3E8 Sherman destroyed, while having killed dozens of SS.            On the 3rd of May, 1945, theFrench Prisoners within Castle Itter rebelled against their captors, the SStropes of the “ Death’s Head brigade” (SS-Totenkopfverbände); beginning with killing one of the top leaders of the prison, Eduard Weiter. This act resulted in the retreat of the SS troops under the order of HauptsturmführerSebastian Wimmer and the true beginning of the battle.

Now freed, the Frenchprisoners armed themselves with the discarded weapons left behind. The nextday, Andreas Krobot snuck through SS lines using a bicycle and went looking forhelp, which he had found in the town of Wörgl in the for of Major Josef Gangl. The Major and his soldiers had made the conscious decision to defy Hitler’sorders, as was surprisingly common among the Wehrmacht in the last few days ofthe war. Gangle and his men had joined up with the Austrian resistance toprotect the town from the SS; because of this, their forces were depleted, and wouldnot be able to be much assistance on their own.

However, Gangl’s troops had metwith a division of American Armor, and its commander of Captain Jack Lee, whoalso decided to help the French prisoners. Even with the small force, thecombined force broke through SS lines and back to the castle.            On the 5th of May, 1945, the SS troops launched their assault. The Sherman had held back the SS fromreaching the gates, but was unfortunately destroyed by an 88mm shell; nocasualties were caused from the destruction, though Major Gangl was killedtrying to pull one of the French Prisoners, former Prime Minister Reynaud fromthe line of fire not long after the destruction of the Sherman.

As the battleraged, the allied side quickly ran low on ammunition and were close to defeat; however, one of the French Prisoners, a tennis player by the name of JeanBorotra lept the castle walls and ran through the SS lines to contact the alliedreinforcements. Miraculously, he both survived and succeeded, leading theUnited States 104th Infantry Regiment, and defeating the SS troops andrescued the prisoners; taking somewhere around 100 SS as prisoners, the formerFrench prisoners evacuated that evening, and reached Paris about five daysafter. It is not certain whether Hauptsturmführer Sebastian Wimmer wascaptured, killed, or escaped during the battle. In the end, it was a shortbattle, lasting only two days, one in conflict, and resulted in an Alliedvictory, as it tended to during the last days of the second World War.            Despite how interesting, and seeminglyridiculous nature of the battle, it is still relatively obscure; the only thingsthat tell the story outside of historical documentaries or other informationsites would be the Swedish metal band Sabaton’s song The Last Battle and a movie coming out in 2018, sharing the samename, directed by Peter Landesman.

As stated previously, the battle was one ofthe only ones, if not the only one, where both German and American forced foughtalongside each other for a goal during World War 2; and that is really fascinating.