

## Department of Defense 2019 Days of Remembrance Poster

**Poster Description:** The Department of Defense 2019 Days of Remembrance poster depicts an alternating blue and white vertically striped cloth typical of the pattern used in the uniforms worn by many holocaust prisoners. The cloth is faded, old, and worn with stains and some frayed areas. Around the outside edge of the poster is a shadowed black border which transitions the edges and provides a feeling of age. White stitching around the black edge surrounds the poster and some of the individual words in the poster. In some areas the stitching is broken.

Situated on the background are various symbols used by the Nazi's to categorize their prisoners. From 1938, Jews in the camps were identified by a yellow star sewn onto their prison uniforms, a perversion of the Jewish Star of David symbol. After 1939, and with some variation from camp to camp, the categories of prisoners were easily identified by a marking system combining a colored inverted triangle with lettering. The badges sewn onto prisoner uniforms enabled SS guards to identify the alleged grounds for incarceration.

Criminals were marked with green inverted triangles, political prisoners with red, "asocials" (including Roma, nonconformists, vagrants, and other groups) with black or—in the case of Roma in some camps—brown triangles. Homosexuals were identified with pink triangles and Jehovah's Witnesses with purple ones. Non-German prisoners were identified by the first letter of the German name for their home country, which was sewn onto their badge. The two triangles forming the Jewish star badge would both be yellow unless the Jewish prisoner was included in one of the other prisoner categories. A Jewish political prisoner, for example, would be identified with a yellow triangle beneath a red triangle.

Across the top third of the poster are 5 separate symbols placed horizontally. The first symbol in the top left quadrant consists of a downward facing red triangle. Overlaid on the red triangle is a capitalized "P" in black text. This symbol represented a political prisoner from Poland. Immediately beneath the triangle is a small red circle which is outlined first by a white line and then with a black line. The small colored circle beneath the triangle represented that this prisoner was an escape suspect.

Below and to the right of the first symbol is a second symbol consisting of an upward facing yellow triangle which is overlaid with a downward facing pink triangle. This symbol represented a Jewish homosexual prisoner.

Above and to the right of the second symbol is a third symbol consisting of a downward facing blue triangle. This symbol represented a foreign forced laborer.

Below and to the right of the third symbol is a fourth symbol consisting of a downward facing green triangle. This symbol represented a professional criminal.

Above and to the right of the fourth symbol is a fifth symbol consisting of an upward facing yellow triangle. Overlaid on the yellow triangle is a downward facing black triangle. Overlaid on the black triangle is a smaller downward facing yellow triangle. This symbol represented a Jewish race defiler (someone who was married to, cohabitated with, or who had sex or children with someone outside of the Jewish race). Immediately below the tip of the black triangle is a small black circle, outlined first in white and then second, in black. This represented that the prisoner was the inmate of a punishment company, meaning this prisoner was targeted for additional harsh treatment. Beneath the small black circle is another red circle outlined first in white, and then second, in black. This circle represented that the prisoner was also an escape suspect.

Centered in the middle of the poster is the observance theme, observance title, and dates spread across four separate lines of text. The first line has the beginning of the theme in white capitalized letters, the words, "Beyond Religious." Immediately beneath the words is a black line separating the second line of text which is in black, capitalized, and larger font, the word "Boundaries." Immediately below the word is a second black line separating the word "Boundaries" from the third line of text which is remainder of the theme, "Learning from the Holocaust" in smaller font and dark brown letters. Centered below the theme is the fourth line with the observance title in brown text, "Days of Remembrance" and the date, "28 April – 5 May 2019," which encompasses Remembrance Day on 2 May.

The bottom third of the poster has an additional six symbols placed horizontally. The first symbol in the bottom left of the poster is an upward facing yellow triangle. Overlaid on the yellow triangle is a downward facing brown triangle. This symbol represented a Jewish member of Roma descent (Gypsy). Immediately below the triangles tip is a small black circle bordered first, by a white line, and then a second, by a black line. This represented the prisoner was an inmate of a punishment company.

Above and to the right of the first symbol is a second symbol consisting of a downward facing black triangle. This represented this was an asocial prisoner. Above the triangle is a horizontal rectangular bar. This represented the prisoner was a repeat offender.

Below and to the right of the second symbol is a third symbol consisting of a downward facing blue triangle. Overlaid is a letter "T" in black text. This symbol represented a Czech Foreign Forced Laborer. Immediately below the tip of the triangle is a small red circle bordered first by a white line, and then second by a black line. This represented this prisoner was an escape suspect.

Below and to the right of the third symbol is a fourth symbol consisting of an upward facing yellow triangle. Overlaid on it is a downward facing yellow triangle. This represented that the prisoner was of Jewish descent.

Above and to the right of the fourth symbol is a fifth symbol consisting of an upward facing yellow triangle. Overlaid on it is a downward facing red triangle. On the red triangle is the letter "F" in black text. This symbol represented a French Jewish political prisoner. Immediately above the triangles is a horizontal, rectangular bar. This represented that the prisoner was a repeat offender. Beneath the tip of the red triangle is a small black circle bordered by first a white line, and then second, by a black line. This represented that the prisoner was also an inmate of a punishment company.

Below and to the right of the fifth symbol is a sixth symbol consisting of a purple downward facing triangle. This symbol represented a Bible Student (Jehovah Witness). Immediately above the triangle is a horizontal purple rectangle which represented that they were a repeat offender.

At the bottom right corner are the Service seals for the Army, Marines, Navy, USAF, Coast Guard, and Department of Defense in consecutive order. Beneath the seals in small text are the words, "Designed by DEOMI – Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute."

For more information on the marking systems, go to:

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/classification-system-in-nazi-concentration-camps>