

# ITALIAN POW CAMP CHAPEL

Texas Historic Landmark

[World War II](#) Prisoner of War Camp

3 1/2 Miles S of [Hereford](#), [Deaf Smith County](#)  
Near [Umbarger](#), Randall County

Photos courtesy [Barclay Gibson](#)



The recently restored POW Camp Chapel, designed and built by the prisoners, themselves.

Photo courtesy [Barclay Gibson](#), August 2009

Photographer's Note:

## Getting There

The Chapel is located about 3-1/2 miles south of [Hereford](#) almost exactly on the [Deaf Smith](#)/Castro County Lines. From FM 1055 west on Deaf Smith CR 1 one mile and south on CR H about 500 yards. The Chapel is plainly visible from CR 1 in the winter but in late summer would be concealed by tall corn stalks. The Chapel and Water Tower are maybe 1/2 mile apart. The county roads in this area are dirt/gravel so maybe it would be best not to be there during rainy season, if there is one. - [Barclay Gibson](#), December 2008

## P.O.W. Camp Chapel Restored

Thanks to an article on the restoration of the Hereford

POW Chapel featured in the Lubbock Avalanche ("Avalanche" in West Texas?!- That's the name) Journal, I went back to see it. The Chapel is now beautiful as it sits in the middle of a lush corn field as opposed the the forlorn look it had just last December. There were two abandoned dogs, more like big puppies, guarding the Chapel.

The Chapel has been beautifully restored. New Plexiglas panels and paint inside and out. The colorful gravel-epoxy flags are nicely redone. Thankfully the brass plaques have been removed, probably to the safety of the Castro County Museum. Here's the link to the Avalanche article:

[Ex-Italian POWs return to Hereford for chapel ceremony](#)

- [Barclay Gibson](#), August 2009



Approaching the POW Camp Chapel  
Photo courtesy [Barclay Gibson](#), December 2008



The restored POW Chapel in the midst of cornfield  
Photo courtesy [Barclay Gibson](#), August 2009



Photo courtesy [Barclay Gibson](#), August 2009



The Restored POW Camp Chapel  
Photo courtesy [Barclay Gibson](#), August 2009



Italian flag  
Photo courtesy [Barclay Gibson](#), August 2009



American flag

Photo courtesy [Barclay Gibson](#), August 2009



Looking in, through the replaced glass

Photo courtesy [Barclay Gibson](#), August 2009





POW Camp Chapel historical marker  
Photo courtesy [Barclay Gibson](#), December 2008

Historical Marker

### **P.O.W. Camp Chapel**

This Chapel is one of the few physical reminders of the days this site served as an Italian Prisoner of War Camp during [World War II](#). The prisoners, several of them fine artisans and craftsmen, designed and built the chapel, crafting the concrete building to resemble marble. Completed in 1945, the chapel stands as a memorial to the five Italians who died while interned at the camp. A restoration project, begun in 1987, was completed in 1989.

Recorded Texas Historic Landmark - 1992



Memorial Headstone

Photo courtesy [Barclay Gibson](#), December 2008



The base of the camp water tower

Photo courtesy [Barclay Gibson](#), December 2008



Interior view showing pump support  
Photo courtesy [Barclay Gibson](#), December 2008

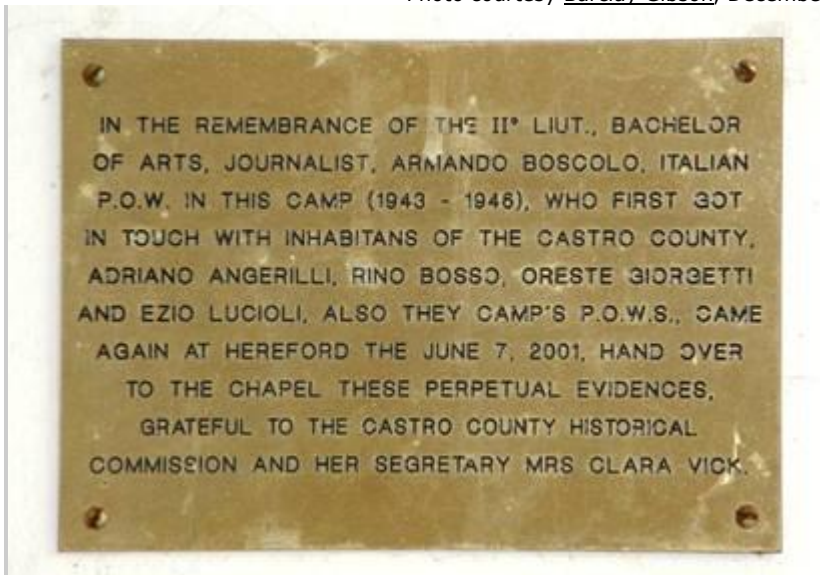


Photo courtesy [Barclay Gibson](#), December 2008

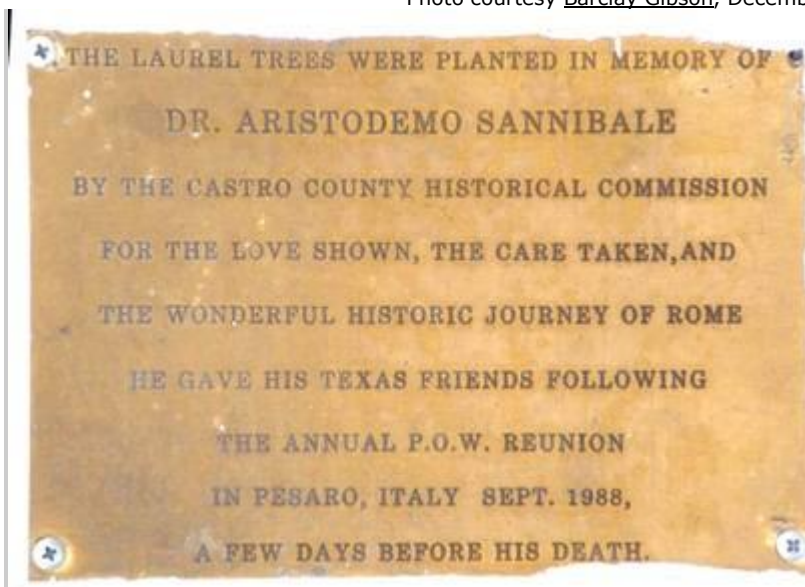


Photo courtesy [Barclay Gibson](#), December 2008





Photo courtesy [Barclay Gibson](#), December 2008

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### [St Mary's church](#)

in nearby town of [Umbarger, Texas](#), Randall County



Photo of [WWII](#) Italian POWs and priests in [Umbarger](#) displayed in the [church](#).

Photo courtesy [Barclay Gibson](#), December 2008

#### **Photographer's Note:**

A lady at the [St Mary's church](#) in [Umbarger](#) was so kind to show me around the church and explain the work done by the Italian Prisoners. In the large painting behind the altar was an angel. The artist, from his memory of his wife, painted her face on the angel. Years later after the war the artist brought his family back and she was able to see her face on the angel. - [Barclay Gibson](#), January 25, 2009

Visit [Umbarger](#) nearby in Randall County



[St. Mary's Church](#) altar in [Umbarger](#)  
Photo courtesy [Barclay Gibson](#), December 2008