



## Ninth Fort

Site of mass execution of Jews in Kovno, Lithuania. Over 50,000 people were killed there during the German occupation, from June 1941 to the summer of 1944. Many were Jews from Kovno or Jews who had been deported from Germany.

In the 19th century the Ninth Fort was one of a series of forts built around Kovno. The Ninth Fort was located four miles from the center of Kovno, and served as a prison between the two world wars.

In the fall of 1943, the Germans began to destroy all evidence of mass murder by burning bodies. This operation was kept completely secret. It was carried out by the *Sonderkommando* serving in *aktion* 1005. Thirty-four prisoners from the Kovno Ghetto, who had tried to escape, were forced to participate in the operation, as well as 26 Soviet prisoners of war and four non-Jews.

The Ninth Fort prisoners were strictly guarded and kept chained after work. Nevertheless, 64 escaped on December 24, 1943. Some reached the Kovno Ghetto, where they were taken to join the partisans. Thus, the horrors committed by the Germans in the Ninth Fort became known a year before the war ended. Today, the fort houses a museum.