

Transcript of the video:
“Concentration camp liberation 1945
Narrated by Julien D. Saks.

I am Julien D. Saks, former Lieutenant Colonel on the special staff of Major General Rodrick Allen, who commanded the 12th army division. This division was one of the best in the United States Army. It successfully defended distress plague against overwhelming odds, in fact it fought so furiously, that when we captured German soldiers later, they, finding out who had captured them said ‘oh the suicide division.’ We were the armor and liberation of Kohl_____ and the closing of the Kohl_____ pocket. General Patton selected us as his secret spearhead in his 3rd army’s drive to the Rhine, thereby taking us temporarily away from the 7th army. We made the 75 miles from the Sigfried line to the Rhine River in about 3 days, an extremely fast operation. We captured a bridge over the Danube River. First time in recorded history that the Danube failed to stop an invading army. We broke the general defense line. Then we played a crucial role in blocking the Brennel pass thereby trapping over a million Germany soldiers in Italy as the war drew to a close. En route from the Danube River to the Brennel pass, the 12th army division and the 4th infantry division liberated 11 small concentration camps satellite to Dachau near Landsberg, Germany. These camps had a max capacity of about 4,000 inmates each. Some were specialized camps, for example, one camp only had criminals in it and in another, medical personnel performed weird experiments on some of its inmates without anesthetic. That was annihilation camp #4 to Dachau. When our troops liberated the camps, they were in hot pursuit of the German soldiers in trying to capture a bridge over the last River. When they saw what they liberated, they were shocked and angry. They threw the inmates what rations they had and kept going. They did capture the bridge over the last River. A railroad bridge. Our troops and vehicles crossed it by putting boards over the rails. I’m going to tell you about my experiences in two of these camps, several hours after they were liberated. Then I’m going to show you some picture and tell you about Sargeant Robert T. Hardwick’s experiences the next day when they were burying the bodies at annihilation camp #4 Dachau. Then I’m going to show you some pictures of my trip to Dachau after the war and to Munich.

About 9:30 or 10:00 in the morning of April the 27th 1945. Captain John Paul Jones, commanding the 134th ordinance maintenance battalion company C, came by division headquarters to tell us what he had seen when he was recovering a disabled tank. He told us about being near a camp where there were dead bodies lying in the streets and a burned building with dead bodies in its ruins. And people in striped suits wandering about the countryside. I had become quite friendly with captain jones, as his company had installed some flame throwers in some tanks for me at “D___”, France. He told me it was a ghastly site and I should go see it. About noon three jeep-loads of soldiers and officers, including myself, went to see the camp. When we arrived, the medics were just closing the gates and saying it was off limits because of the danger of typhus. They allowed us to go inside but warned us not to go in any buildings. We looked about and what we saw was so horrible that we were speechless. I counted 65 bodies lying in the ditches of one short street. They were thin and emaciated and probably been starved to death. I doubt if any of them weighted over 70 pounds. They were sparsely clothed and in

some cases, were completely naked. The smell of death was all around. The skin on some of them had shrunk and cracked, they had sores. It was cold there in April. Madrid, Spain is at the same latitude of New York City. And so you could see how far north we were. Probably the equivalent of being at the southern part of Hudson Bay in Canada. Even in summertime, we wore uniforms. I looked in one of the houses that the inmates lived in. It was built by digging a pit with steps at one end and constructing the building in the pit. The eaves of the roof, the slanting roof, came down to about a foot and a half from the ground level, I looked in the doorway. It had a shelf on each side of a central aisle. About five feet wide and about two feet above the floor, which was dirt. The inmates slept on this shelf with their feet towards the aisle. I do not recall seeing any bedding although there could have been some. We were in the camp probably 15 to 30 minutes. And then as we left to go back to the gate we passed a building which the SS guards had locked, about 65 or 70 inmates in it and set it on fire. The bodies lay between the burned sills of the building. This site was so horrible, that we were speechless. And we were combat troops, used to death and destruction. We left his camp where everyone was dead and were wandering about the country side. We went to another camp, this one housed criminals. There were quite a few live people walking around. One of the dRivers had been there previously and warned us about giving them food. He said we would be swamped by the individuals and probably knocked over in the rush. As we drove in the gate there was a wagon just inside the gate about half filled with bodies and bodies lying on the ground. This was probably the wagon that came daily to pick up the bodies of those who had died in the previous day. The detail was probably interrupted by news of our troops nearby and fled, taking the horse with them, with some of them of his back. Our tanks were about five miles faster than the German tanks. But the Germans figured our speed at the tanks of the German tanks. So our tanks usually came a short time before they were expected.

One man shuffled up to us like he could hardly walk and pointed to his open mouth. His mouth was almost black, probably from starvation. Corporal Duane C___ and I got out of the jeep and started to raise a tarp over the back of the jeep, where we had a closed wooden box of K rations and cardboard cartons. The minute we started raising the tarp, we were mobbed by a rush of people, pawing and grabbing at the back of the jeep, looking for food they couldn't find because it was in a closed wooden box. I was afraid they would tear the jeep apart, so I took hold of one man's arm and pulled at him. I felt like I could have pulled his arm off before he would let go, so I let him loose. A woman got a bottle of wine and ran about 30 feet, held it up and kept looking at us. I suppose she wanted to see what we were going to do about it. I ignored her and hoped the weak wine would not injure her weakened stomach. Much of the water in Europe is polluted and people drink a weak wine that has just enough alcohol in it to kill the germs. I elbowed my way under the steering wheel and started the motor, let it run a few minutes. That didn't faze the people pawing at the back of the jeep. One man took out the captain German rifle I carried because I was armed with a pistol. And a rifle is much more accurate especially at a distance than a pistol. When he saw what it was, he put it back. Then I stood up on the front seat of the jeep, pulled my 45 out of his holster and with the safety on and my finger out of the trigger guard, I started waving it with the muzzle pointing up. Finally one man saw it and pointed to it. The other saw it and then dropped

back from the jeep. Colonel C_____ jumped in and I drove about 3 blocks away, where we opened the wooden box and the cardboard cartons containing the K rations. Then we returned and distributed them. As we were running out of food, we both got into the jeep and C_____ started the motor and we started to drive away. I dropped the last can we had into a man's outstretched hands. And another man grabbed at it and it rolled to the ground. The two struggled for it a moment and one man got it and broke away from the other about two or three feet. The loser shuffled slowly away. I don't know what these criminals had done but they were certainly in sad shape. They were treated better than the political or ideological prisoners.

There were a number of people in striped suits wandering around. Some of them looked like walking skeletons. Military duties were urgent and I could not stay any longer so I went back to division headquarters. There I ran into Captain Worm, who was head of Order of Battle Detachment of the division intelligence section. He told me he had captured a high official at one of the camps. But he had a tremendous trouble getting him back to division headquarters alive for interrogation, as the soldiers were so incensed at what they had seen that they wanted to kill him. He also told me about an inmate he had talked with at one of the camps. This inmate was the middle generation of 3 generations of his family in the camp. One day the guards built a huge fire and told him to push his father into it. He refused to do so, but his father told him to go ahead because at least his son would survive. So he pushed his father into it and the father died a horrible death. And a few days later they built another fire and told him to push his son into it. He refused to do so. They led him away and were trying to figure out what to do with him. Meanwhile our tanks arrived and the man was liberated. Captain said the man was crazy with hatred. And would probably kill Germans until the man himself was killed but there was nothing we could do about it. Also I took my typhus shot and found it was going to be outdated. So I took another one.

In the afternoon of April 27th one of our army infantry battalions supported by an army field artillery battalion captured annihilation camp #4 to Dachau. But before our troops took the camp, the SS guards rounded up and locked up all the live prisoners they could find, in their barracks, nailed the doors shut and set them on fire. Practically all were either burned to death or suffocated while still alive. Sergeant Julius Ed Bernstein, a member of Colonel Seiller's military government section. He was ordered to accompany the battalion in its capture of the camp. I have his tape telling what he found and also some pictures showing the bodies in the burned buildings and scattered around the burned buildings. Major General Rodrick Allen was military governor of whatever German territory we captured as long as it was in our jurisdiction. Colonel Seiller with his G5? military government section, was in charge of handling all the details of the military governments. He appointed the new Burgermeisters or mayors and posted the rules for the civilians to follow, supervised the government and generally dealt with the civilians. When Colonel Seiller entered the camp early the next morning, he found in addition to the bodies burned in the buildings, a large group of bodies that were freshly killed and piled up in piles or scattered about. It seems that the guards were attempting to hide the atrocities that they were committing and had some of the prisoners who were left alive, to carry the bodies outside of the camp and began dig mass graves. But I think our

troops arrived so swiftly that they were not able to bury one single body. When Colonel Seiller saw the situation, he requisitioned a group of trucks and GIs. A GI is the name that the ordinary soldier called himself. It refers to [General Issue?]: referring to his clothes and equipment. The GIs and trucks went into Landsberg and in the surrounding countryside and rounded up about 250 German civilians and brought them to the camp to have them look at what went on in the camp....

[Video cuts.]

I am now going to show you some pictures obtained from Sergeant Hardwick. These pictures show some of the German civilians and some of the bodies. This picture shows Colonel Seiller talking to some of the German civilians and Colonel Seiller is still among the bodies. His first Sergeant Max Bill is translating his words into German. Max Bill was born in Germany and spent his early years there. However his father fled Hitler in the early 1930s to New York City, where Max graduated from New York University. Max spoke German better than the average German and knew German history. The Colonel told me that Max was extremely helpful to him in his dealings with the German civilians. There are the bodies and there are the civilians, there's Max and there's another first Lieutenant, from his insignia, I judge from the 4th infantry division.

This picture shows Colonel Seiller standing near a different group of bodies. Here are GIs in the background on the other side of the bodies and here is a watchtower.

Picture #3 shows Colonel Seiller walking by the group of bodies shown in picture #2. Here is a GI, and he's apparently taking pictures. Here is the watchtower.

This picture shows a civilian standing among another group of bodies. A photographer is taking his picture. GIs is on the left of the photographer are watching him take the picture. There is a watchtower in the far background. Louis Lockner, the #1 correspondent of the American troops was present although Colonel Seiller didn't know it at the time. Louis Lockner wrote up this particular episode and it was shown in most of the newspapers in the United States.

Now we will go to Sergeant Hardwick's story. Now he begins by saying (I'm quoting), "Last night we moved into a new town, new in the sense that the German soldiers had just been run out of it. We wandered around a little, picking up the new rumors. There was a group of people that had just been liberated from the camps that day. They told us about the atrocities practiced by the Germans on their prisoners. We took their stories with a grain of salt. And didn't believe all they had to say. They told us about being slowly starved, about eating thin potato soup, grasshoppers, snails and weeds and dandelions. [points to a picture labeled 28 April 1945 in Landsberg Germany] Later that evening at a meeting, our commanding officer, Captain John Paul Jones told us about a camp he had visited: Annihilation camp #4 to Dachau where they burned several hundred bodies that day. That seemed impossible to us, as did the other stories. But the next morning I had an opportunity to drive out and view the scene and witness the mass barbarism that took place. Our party consisted of Captain Jones, Sergeant Robert L.

Tannehill?, PFC Singer, and myself. When we had driven about 8 miles, we knew we were near the campsite because of the sickening odor of burned bodies. We passed signs warning of typhus. As we drew near the building the sight that met our eyes was unbelievable. Row and rows of dead. Dead who had died differently and most horrible deaths. Some were killed by injections, injections of what, we did not know. Others were burned to death and still more were starved and beaten to death. Some appeared to have been poisoned. Others, we were told, were killed by an injection of oxygen into their blood streams. Some were at least 30 hours dying, because even while we were there, a groan could be occasionally heard from that mass, or the movement of an arm or a leg could be seen. The expression on their faces was indescribable. The positions they were in were grotesque. Some half sitting, others on one arm twisted...”

[video cuts]

Sergeant Hardwick’s story...to show you some more pictures. This picture shows the entrance to the camp, a simple wire gate topped with barbed wire. About 6 to 7 feet tall. A small sentry house to the right.

This picture shows five bodies scattered about just inside the gate. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5...An unburned barracks building is shown in the background.

This picture shows us a part of the large mass of bodies. Note the grotesque positions they’re in. Here is a man’s head down at the lower part of the picture

...here is a woman’s head wrapped in a shawl. Note the grotesque positions there. This one didn’t quite show up as well as the others.

This picture is a picture, a close up, of two inmates. Notice the sores on the head and neck of this man and on the nose of this man.

Here are two more bodies. Notice how thin this man is. Looks like you could even put your hand around his neck. This man is thin also. They starved to death.

This man’s ribs are showing, look how thin his face is. Sunken cheeks and eyes, starved to death.

The condition of these bodies shows you something about what the bodies were like and how the inmates were worked and starved to death. It is inconceivable that one human being could do this to another. Why am I showing you these pictures? Because in Germany, in Europe, and even in the United States many books have been written stating that said that the Holocaust was a Jewish myth or that it didn’t happen. Or if it did happen, it happened on such a small scale as to be insignificant. I have been in correspondence with Karl Rosenberg of Omaha, Nebraska. He was an inmate of Dachau and some other camps. He told me that a man in California wrote such a book and even offered a \$50,000 reward to anyone who could prove that the camps existed and also

offered a debate about it. Karl took him up on this matter. But the offer was quickly withdrawn and as far as I know, there was never any debate.

[It becomes unclear here whether he is telling information from his own experiences or if he is quoting the testimony of Sergeant Hardwick.]

We will now go back to Sergeant Hardwick's story. Let us identify the place as the Landsberg concentration camp area. "In the short time we were there, we drove about five campsites, each having about 1000 acres. One of these we explored rather thoroughly. This was known as the Krankenlager, Lager meaning camp. And this was called the sick camp. We found out later that the official name of the camp was Vernichtungslager #4 to Dachau, annihilation camp #4 to Dachau. This is where the biggest burnings took place."

I'm now going to show you some of the pictures Hardwick took of some of the burned buildings. This building has had the bodies removed. And it shows the burned remains of the building.

This picture shows a burned building, there's the chimney, there's the roofs of two unburned barracks building. But the bodies have been removed from this one.

Here is another burned building. That's the chimney. There's the remains of the buildings. There's the roof of another building in the background. The bodies have been removed here too.

"Many buildings were left standing. We went through some that were empty. The odor was nauseating. The floor of the building was about 3 or 4 feet below the surface of the ground. The roof of the building was of rough boards and covered with dirt. Each building was about 50 feet long and about 15 feet wide. It had a central aisle with a shelf about five feet wide and two feet above the ground on each side of it, a small pad of straw on the shelf for each prisoner to sleep on. There was a stove in the center of the building, but without fuel, I don't believe there was as much fuel in the entire camp as I've seen behind the average farmhouse in Germany. Here is a picture showing the exterior of the building. Notice the disorderly condition. Here are the shelves the prisoners slept on. Here is the stove, there's a double _____...that's the central aisle.

They claimed the condition of the prisoners was due to typhus. Now we know that this generally not true. It was due to malnutrition and overwork. The kitchen was a filthy and half open place and had large pots that were used to prepare soups and other foods. There was nothing in the building that could be used for preparing solid foods of any kind."

Each prisoner's ration consisted of potato soup made in the proportion of one pound of potatoes to one gallon of water. To make it worse, the cooks ate a considerable part of the potatoes. A one pound loaf of bread was issued each day for 8 men. Much of our information was obtained from two inmates, who escaped into the woods a few days before the Americans came. They knew from the actions of the guards that the Americans

were coming. One of these fellows was Russian and the other was Jewish. They told us that about 400 of the original 4,000 inmates were marched away the day before the Americans came. We did not find out until 38 years later what had happened to them. I will tell you about that later.

This camp was full of political prisoners, all of them. About $\frac{3}{4}$ of them were Jewish and the rest were a mixture of other nationalities. The Jewish fellow had witnessed his wife and children being put in the gas chamber. He was on the work detail that took out the bodies when they were dead. He explained what the common method was of burning bodies before the gas chamber and the cremation oven were perfected. A pit 9 by 30 feet was filled with burning coals and live human beings were dumped into it from railroad cars.

The next picture shows another part of the large mass of bodies. This is gravel, there are the bodies. Note the grotesque positions they are in. These bodies were all freshly killed and the flesh was soft. The skin was waxy and wrapped tightly around the bones. The bodies of the inmates were about 5 inches in diameter, their hands were like claws. The knees and hands of those who could only crawl and couldn't walk were worn down through the skin and into the flesh. Some had open sores, old sores, because there was no nutrition to heal the tissues. After Colonel Seiller had talked to the civilians and taken them on a tour of the camp, the civilians were separated into two groups. One group was sent to pick up the bodies that were taken by the SS troops out of the campsite to be buried to hide the atrocities.

This picture shows a group of the bodies that were taken outside the camp and there is the forest. There are the bodies, a small group.

One group was divided into pairs, each pair took a body. Here is a pair taking the body, a man and a woman, you can tell by her skirt. The GIs were in charge. Here is one, you can tell from his helmet and there is one, you can tell from his helmet, they were in charge of that group.

This is a picture of two Germans carrying a body. There is the body. Here is one of the Germans. This German seems to be well dressed. There are the railroad tracks, there is a telegraph wire and there is the forest outside of the camp.

Here is a blown up picture, showing 11 Germans digging a mass grave. These are bodies brought to the mass grave to be buried when the grave was completed. Here are some GIs watching and they were the drivers of the trucks, over here that brought the Germans out to the camp.

This picture shows some of the bodies, close up, that are lying by the side of the grave. Here is the grave that the Germans are digging. Here are the bodies, notice how thin they are. Here is a boy or girl, naked, probably about 12 or 13 years old. Here are some GIs and there are the trucks. These blown up pictures...were blown up from Sergeant

Hardwicks' negatives, who was kind enough to loan them to us. They did a superb job of enlarging these pictures from Sergeant Hardwick's negatives.

This picture is a close up showing three bodies. Look at the expression on that man's face, he probably died a very horrible death.

Here is another close up showing some of the faces. Look at the expression of this man's face, that man's face....they probably all died very horrible deaths.

Here are some more bodies. Look at their expressions.

Here is a picture of a man shown lying barefoot. He's wrapped up in what clothes he could find. It's cold there in April.

We walked the railroad track to find the worst. Here, some 60 people had been put to digging their own graves with spoons and dishes. For some reason the detail was interrupted. They were all violently killed, chopped to death with an ax. This picture shows some of the bodies. Here is a GI, between him and the camera is a body that had its head chopped off...that's the stump of the neck. The head is not in the picture.

As we drove from the camp, we found more horrible sights. Some of the prisoners had escaped. Either the shots had not taken effect or they had been skipped. There were several lying dead, two or three miles away, some were walking dead. Stopped over and could hardly move their feet. Some stooped over double. There was one fellow that I will never forget. He could hear our jeep coming along before we got to him. With the most painful effort, he turned toward us, straightened himself up and saluted. The effort to do this was probably more than he could spare. These pictures are unbelievable. But to really appreciate the scenes, you had to have actually witnessed them. Even with the pictures, as horrible as they are, they do not completely tell the story. Now that you have seen something about what took place in the camps, I want to tell you that the SS guards maintained a high degree of secrecy about what went on in the camps. Actually, generally the people who knew about what went on in the camps were the SS guards, their Nazi superiors and some of the inmates. The inmates didn't frequently live much longer. Even people who knew something about it, were afraid to talk and are still reluctant to do so. Many families who have had members executed or punished for their participation in the war crimes, by the war crimes commission or other courts, feel that...believe these stories...that the Holocaust was a Jewish myth and didn't exist and feel that the decision of these courts were unjust. Others were ashamed of the atrocities and feel that they should be forgotten and never mentioned. There's a saying in the book of quotations, and I quote, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." By George Santa Ana. We cannot allow the Holocaust to be repeated because of the suffering and death that took place. Ten million people... Eleven! million people, 5 million non- Jews and 6 million Jews perished in these camps. 1/3 of the total Jewish population of the world. Who can this be repeated against? It can be repeated against anyone? All it takes is a ruler like Hitler, who persuades a certain portion of his people to hate certain groups and nations. And to control his people by some means such as the secret police.

Remember that the bodies that you have seen today could be in the future yours, your family's or even your friends. It could be that the taking of the bridge at Dillinger and the destroying of the other bridges over the Danube River could have been a tremendous factor in saving the lives of tens of thousands of inmates at Dachau and the other camps southeast of the Danube River.

Unexpected by the Nazis or at least...you'll recall that, I mentioned earlier in the story that we did not know where the 400 who were marched away from that annihilation camp #4 to Dachau...what happened to them. And that I would tell you about it later. Well, in the early part of 1983 I was responsible, principally, for an article published in the Magazine of the Jewish War Veterans, the oldest organization of veterans in the US, 92 years old. The article was entitled, "GIs discover the Holocaust." In the next issue of "the Veteran", there was a letter to the editor, which I will quote in part, "Thank you for publishing the article, "GIs discover the Holocaust." I was a prisoner for ten months at the camp #4 Dachau, no one would believe what I saw during the ten months that I was there. Every minute of it: the torture, the beatings, and the suffering. I was lucky enough to walk out with the healthier people on April 25th, they took us out to Dachau, to the main camp, where we were liberated a few days later. If the American troops had not arrived so soon, if they had come a few days later, they would have found not a single concentration camp victims alive. They were getting ready to kill us all."

When I received my liberators' certificate at a meeting of the Houston area's survivors of the Nazi Holocaust in April 1982, it was presented to me by _____, who was a survivor of Dachau at the time it was liberated. He told me that if the troops had come later, they would have found no Dachau. Meaning that the prisoners would have been killed, buried in mass graves and probably the camp buildings destroyed. Like what the Nazi guards did it at the #4 camp, before the American troops came and were attempting to hide the bodies.

I personally believe that God made a miracle that allowed us to capture the bridge over the Danube River. To show the world what took place in the camps south and south east of the Danube River. If the American troops had come a little later, they would have found nothing. Our division had been well prepared for the task. Those chosen to be chiefs of the general and special staff section, were sent to commanding general staff school as a group together with our then commanding officer, General _____...then we went to the camp camel and organized the division, and worked together for about 2 and a half years until we went into combat at N_____ on December the 5th 1945. In April 1982 issue of the magazine of the 12th army division stated, I quote, "the Danube River had never been crossed before in recorded history. Armies and raiders had tried for hundreds of years but no one had been able to cross it...until the 12th army division, hellcats, did that which could not be done."

What actually happened was that in the early morning hours of April 22nd 1945, several of our task forces consisting of tanks and armored infantry in half tracks were behind the German lines trying to capture a bridge over the Danube River. They had a number of bridges blown up as they approached. One task force commanded by Lieutenant Colonel

Clayton Wells of Texas came to the outskirts of Dillinger. There was a bridge across the Danube there on the far side of the town. Firing all guns furiously, the task force raced down the main street of Dillinger towards the bridge. The guards at the bridge, expecting the town to be captured first, were caught by surprise. And were either shot or captured. The explosions were diffused by Captain William Riddell? of Liberty, Missouri and by Sergeant Ogden Husten? of Spokane, Washington. Then, surrounded by German soldiers, and holding only the bridge, the task force radioed the division for help. The division, with vehicles bumper to bumper, fought its way down and defended two lane roads, leading to Dillinger, 25 or 30 miles away. We saw German soldiers standing quite a distance away. They didn't bother us and we didn't bother them, as we had something else to do. After several hours or so, we reached Dillinger, rescued the task force and poured across the Danube River and quickly established a bridge head, 6 miles deep and 10 miles wide. The 7th army sent from its reserves, tanks and half tracks, trucks loaded with soldiers, as fast as they could go, two abreast into Dillinger and across the bridge, quickly, in order to widen the bridge head. And along the south side of the Danube River, while we proceeded to the Brennel pass. It could be that the German soldiers, trapped on the northwest bank of the Rhine, acted like the German soldiers who were trapped on the west bank of the Rhine River, when we spearheaded Patton's drive to the Rhine. The soldiers trapped on the west bank of the River, felt like the war was over for them and they surrendered in such droves that all we could do was just point in the general direction of the prisoner of war enclosures and they walked to them without guards and turned themselves in. It could be that the German soldiers trapped on the northwest bank of the Rhine [Danube?] actually did the same thing but particularly as the German high command probably expected the Danube to hold us as it had done to invading armies for centuries. The capture of the bridge over the Danube also probably had a great deal to do with the quick ending of the war.

The Germans were strengthening that area near Burgesguard? where the Americans forces probably expected the Germans to make their last stand. The Danube River had always held invading armies for centuries and they expected it to hold us for weeks or possibly months. They expected to bring German soldiers from Italy through the Brennel Pass and to strengthen that area, but to capture the bridge over the Danube changed all that. The troops trapped on the west bank of the Danube River could not reinforce the south east bank of the Danube River.

Five days after capturing the bridge, we liberated the 11 concentration camps in the center of Landsberg, Germany. Two days later on April the 29th, the 7th army's 42nd and 45th infantry divisions liberated Dachau. Five days later on May 4 we played the major role in closing the Brennel Pass. I was told we got five of the six exits from the Brennel Pass into Germany and the 14th army got the sixth. This trapped over a million German soldiers in Italy and the war drew to a close. The Airforce had been bombing the pass and closing it but the Germans had been reopening it, allowing German soldiers to escape from Italy into Germany to strengthen that area's defenses. The war was over on May 8th. It took several days to notify all the troops on both sides that the war would be over on a certain time and on a certain date and to cease firing. But we knew the war was over for us on May 5th because we were sent back over a hundred miles into Germany to occupy a

large slice of German territory that was cut down as other units came back. Thus our duties changed from fighting to occupation.

I'm now going to tell you about my trip to Dachau. My father was born in Ober____, Germany. And I wanted to visit the place. He immigrated to the U.S. in 1875 as a small child and became a loyal American citizen. In fact he was sent a telegram from President Wilson commending him for his services as county chairman of the Red Cross in a town of less than 20,000 people, having a post nearby of 40,000 people, so... I was able to go on June 17th, Sunday. Sergeant Ellis Smith the Operation Sergeant, Private Dubois who drove us, and I left early in the morning. We stopped for about an hour in Munich, there we visited the B____ [Burgerbraukeller?], which was a beer hall, the putsch beer hall, where Hitler planned the putsch by which he overthrew the German government in early 1933. This is the entrance to the street to the putsch beer hall. I am standing at the... There are GIs lounging around. Then we went to the enormous open air stadium where Hitler spoke to huge crowds. Note the size of the statue and the stadium in relation to the people who are walking up the steps and around. Probably smaller than a pencil point.

Then we proceeding to an Obstmarkt, but after we had gone a few miles, we saw a sign stating that Dachau was nearby so we decided to see that.

[video cuts and he is now pointing to a picture]

Sgt. Ellis Smith and two guards standing at the entrance to Dachau. We started through the camp unescorted because two of us had already commenced. We fell in behind a Lieutenant who was conducting a tour at an execution place. This execution place had mounds of dirt around it to stop stray bullets. It had a ditch with a wooden grating over it which was about 14 inches deep and 2 feet wide. The prisoners were executed with their heads over the grating and were shot in the back of the head. The blood would go through the grating and into the ditch. During the break, I talked with the Lieutenant; he asked me if I had seen the doghouses. I told him that I had taken a picture of them. This is picture #26, these are the doghouses. He asked me what they thought they did with the dogs. I told them I imagined they would use them to capture escaped prisoners. He said, yes they were used for that but on lonesome, tiresome afternoons, Sunday afternoons, they would use the dogs for another purpose. They would string a male prisoner up to the rafter of the ceiling and then sick the dogs on him, the dogs had been trained to bite off his genitals. At another camp, the wife of the camp commander had a lampshade which was made of human skins. That gives you some idea of how prisoners were treated.

The lieutenant had ridden to the camp on the back of a tank. No one knew what was to be expected. The American soldiers were first shocked and angry when they saw how the prisoners were being treated. They shot all the guards they could find. The inmates picked up the guards' weapons and hunted for other guards and for prisoners who had cooperated with the guards. It was regular bedlam until all the guards they could find were dead. The prisoners, some attacked the guards and tried to tear their arms off their

bodies. They were really angry at the guards. The soldiers found bodies stacked like wood...outside the crematorium and a trainload of bodies waiting to be unloaded.

This photo shows our drive, Private Dubois, outside the entrance #2, that's Private Dubois and that's the entrance to #2.

Picture #28 shows a Russian first aid man at the entrance #4.

[video cuts]

...to the gas chamber and told to undress and put their clothes in neat piles. They were expecting a shower...

[video cuts]

The signs on the doors (points to picture) these doors, had warning signs on them. There were doors that the squads that took out the dead bodies used. The doors that the prisoners used to get in to be gassed had no warning signs on them. When they were dead, the gold was taken from their teeth and their clothes and other belongings were taken to a warehouse. The bodies were taken to the crematoriums and burned.

This is a picture of one of the crematorium furnaces. They were small furnaces and they had an iron stretcher on wheels that they used to fill with corpses and then push into the chambers. The ashes were used for fertilizer.

I wrote a story for a magazine. In the next issue of the magazine it had a letter from Miriam _____ from Chicago. She said, "I was a prisoner in annihilation camp #4 to Dachau. I was fortunate enough to walk away with the prisoners who were healthy. We were taken to Dachau and if the American troops had not come we would have been dead. They were getting ready to kill us all." Also the man who gave me my liberator's certificate, was an inmate at Dachau and he said the same thing: that if the American troops hadn't come so quickly they wouldn't have found a single building erected or a prisoner alive. Dachau was the first and one of the largest extermination camps in existence. It had 30,000 prisoners plus those in the satellite camps. They had at one time or another, 200 satellite camps. The fact we captured this bridge over the Danube had a profound effect on the shortening of the war. The Danube had never failed before to halt an invading army that tried to cross it. The capture of the bridge allowed the 42 and 45 infantry divisions to capture Dachau on April the 29th, two days after we captured the 11 camps at Landsberg. I feel that God allowed us to capture the bridge over the Danube so that the world would know what happened at the camps south and southeast of the river.

Here are some pictures a couple weeks after the capture. This is a picture of the barracks area. It shows a man walking.

This picture shows one of the washing machines. This is where they would wash the clothes. It shows a man standing back there.

Here are some additional pictures. This picture shows several American soldiers taking pictures near some bodies. Here are some other bodies. And they are just lying scattered on the ground.

This is a picture of one of the inmates at one of the camps. Notice how thin he is.

This sign says, Typhus, danger of Typhus.

This picture shows bodies scattered around on the ground.

This picture shows some bodies scattered on the ground. There's a guardhouse. There's a house for the prisoners.

There is a man lying in a building that has been set on fire. The other bodies have been removed.

Here is an officer going towards a building that seems to be an administrative building of the camp.

This picture shows some of the inmates, here is a GI soldier and here is another soldier. And here is a couple more. Soldiers are mixed in with the crowd.

These pictures are the only pictures I have. They were sent to me from Dr. Gordon. He was a surgeon for one of the battalions.

These pictures give you some idea of what the concentration camps were like.