

Please continue.

So the German officer, being brutalized by these several Red Army officers, that they stopped and said, well, show us, how would you handle that? So I said, sure I'll show you. Told this bleeding German to stand at attention. I yelled at him, in fact, in German.

So he scrambled back to his feet. But I saw in his eyes that he looked at me at the only possible savior in the room. I told him to produce his identification papers, which they always carried. Asked him what unit was he in, and what was his function. Knew he was a major.

So he said he was a Zahlmeister. Zahlmeister means a finance officer, and the pay salary disbursing department in the Wehrmacht. So I said prove it to me. How many men did you have under him, under yourself? What was the annual payroll?

A few simple questions which I knew enough to ask so that he couldn't really fake that. And I asked him these questions. I asked him what was the size of the unit that he was paying, thinking that perhaps he was in the General von Tippelskirch command, and therefore I could get a better idea to the size of their surrendering force.

But he was not that high level. And so I squeezed him dry in the few minutes, and said, you see, he doesn't really have anything of great value for us. But I told the Red Army officers, but you know, I know that you have suffered incredibly more than we have from the German overrunning your country and killing your relatives and friends of yours.

Nevertheless, I don't think that it behooves us or you to sink to the German level. And this officer, he was not a very high level man, understood this so clearly that he opened the door and told the guard, a simple soldier of Mongolian appearance, to take him out, and he said, in Russian, he admonished him. Don't mistreat him.

The way he put it, of course, I am sure that his soldier obeyed. I know that I saved that man's life, not that it mattered one iota really, neither then nor today. But talking about the principle of collective guilt, I am not sure whether something like what the Nazis did cannot happen anywhere under different circumstances. In every nation, there are brutes.

And that gives me something to think about. When I saw, a day or two after having gone to the concentration camp, my main concern was how to help provide survival possibilities. As paratroopers we had, of course, all had survival training. You know, we get dropped some place without food or water, and have to make go.

But it was nothing to ready us for survival of concentration camp inmates. Had nothing to do with that kind of survival, our military training. So I got busy right away in two directions.

Part time, of course, because I have to make sure that the German administration was getting reorganized so we could pull the proper levers of command, and make them do the things that a conquered nation has to be done, has to do, so that everything would function, the town would be cleaned up, and millions of things had to be done.

But the first thing was food for the surviving concentration camp inmates. There must have been a couple of thousand there. And we didn't have enough food. The 82nd Airborne, although well-fed, did not have a ration, say 1.1 ration. We had one ration per man, and we could not share that. It was not feasible to do that.

So I ran around the German bakeries, and I found, I believe, six bakeries in town. Told them start baking bread, but my orders. Of course, all bakers answered the same thing. We have no flour. We can't bake bread. We have no coal. We can't bake bread.

By a miraculous coincidence, I went through a German Wehrmacht, German army warehouse, and I found a huge mountain of grain. So I quickly ran to the best baker, because that fellow, he must have been around 70 years old, but he obviously knew the problem that I had to solve.

And I said, look, I have found a lot of wheat. So you can make bread. And I have found a lot of brown coal briquettes, so you can fire up your ovens. The briquettes will be delivered within the hour. So he sort of shrugged himself, and finally brought himself to point out to yours truly that you can't bake bread from wheat. You need flour.

Being a city boy, I really didn't quite understand this on the spot. Of course, the minute he mentioned this, I realized that somehow I had to find a flour mill. I found a flour mill which was on the Red Army side of the demarcation line. Their answer to whatever proposal we ever made was this simple one word, nyet.

It was always nyet, no matter what we would explain. Luckily, it didn't take me very long to understand that their nyet was just not something that I have to take. And I told them they had a lot of horses there. In fact, they had a cavalry division, I believe, if not more.

I told them that, oh, we happened to have some oats, because I know something about horses. And I know that these Russian cavalry men, they would rather die than let their horses die. They loved their horses. It's ingrained in them. So when they heard that we had oats, they said, what do you want?

I said, you get one sack of oats for every, I forget now whether it was three or five sacks of wheat that you would mill. And we had instantly lots of flour and bread was being baked. Delicious German country bread. It was being distributed to the survivors. Quite a few must have survived on that account. For quite a few, unfortunately, it was too late.

Another thing I have to do is I had to find where to lodge them. I couldn't just leave them mill around in the city and the streets of the town, or around the concentration camp. The German population was terribly worried about that. Although I must say, they were not committing any atrocities, any retribution.

In fact, this is something I myself couldn't understand. How could they not seek revenge. But that was the last thing on their minds. We were more vengeful than the survivors were. So I found the German, a large German military hospital with a number of wings.

I immediately went to speak to their head surgeon, the man in charge. And I said, you can't see him, because he's operating. I said I was in no mood for protocol with the Germans to worry about the operation of a German soldier by the chief German surgeon.

I said, you better get me over there. And finally, I went through several operating rooms, one after the other. And in the midst of operations, and I'd look. It was some other surgeon and most of them there. And I pulled out, went to the next one. And finally, I barged into one room where, indeed, this chief surgeon was amputating some German soldier's leg.

I remember the German soldier was squirming. He was not well anesthetized. And they were cutting off, sawing the leg off. And when I saw that, and this poor German soldier screaming there in agony, somehow, despite everything, I pulled back and closed the door. Said OK, let him finish.

When he finished, I said, I ordered the sergeant to clear out one wing of the hospital, and to prepare the rooms for the survivors that were still ambulatory. Our own medics organized a shuttle service with whatever few ambulances we had back and forth until the hospital rooms in that wing were filled. On the floor, there were of course no beds or any amenities. It was just a roof, a brick, solidly built hospital.

And these survivors were laying on the floor. And so I was very happy that at least a few more would survive, and without that. Then the next day, I remembered that I had other things on my mind, and busy. I took a detour. I went back. I just went to check up on this stuff.

And I could see our medics were running back and forth. We had a few medics, not that many, but whatever medics were being spared from the 82nd Airborne were working in this hospital. And I walked around there, inspecting the bodies, the dead ones were being piled out in the passageway to make room in inside the rooms for more, because they were touching like sardines literally.

The whole floor was a carpet of survivors in horrible shape. And every hour, I don't know how many were dying, but quite a few. So then I looked at one, and I told the medic, hey, this guy is dead. And then I bend over, and I remember I picked up his hand. His hand was absolutely listless and cold.

And he just looked at me. He was a corpse. And just as I looked at him, he opened his eyes and looked right through me. And I realized he was not dead. So I dropped his hand in horror, and I walked out of the room. I remember to this day where within a hairline, I almost had him thrown out on the heap of corpses in the hallway, yet he was alive.

I couldn't see the difference between life and death. And to this day, I remember that there by miracle, he stayed. I don't know. Maybe he died anyway. Maybe he survived. But it was that kind of situation. And constantly things like that were going on.

Well, corpses were there in size-- large volume. We had realized that we ordered the Germans to disinter these pits where they had the common graves in the concentration camp where they buried them. And somebody in our division-- it may have been Major Woods, our division chaplain, who was a terrific man himself-- somebody organized or said, we will rebury them decently.

And so everybody who could be spared became instantly mobilized for this reburial ceremony. And what happened there is that the division headquarters was a beautiful little castle that belonged to the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg.

And in front of this castle was a large garden with water fountains and beautiful trees. And as is typical of these little castles, with an alley way right in front of the castle for maybe a kilometer, or almost a kilometer long.

So we told the Germans that we'll rebury all of this concentration camp corpses, pull them out of the common graves, and dig graves. Put them like US Army casualties in white mattress covers, and rebury them.

And before they would be actually covered with earth, we wanted every German first to participate in doing the physical labor. And second, of course, to march through and to hear at least the burial address that our division chaplain Major Woods gave.

Excuse me, were these Germans military or civilian, or both?

Both. What happened there is, of course, the little town of Ludwigslust was filled with civilians. It was not a very big town. It may have 50,000 or 30,000 people. It was a whole neat, organized administration, typical German, where everything was flawless.

The command structure was beautiful. So all we need to do is take the mayor, the burgermeister, and organize all the channels of responsibility before changing, kicking out the Nazis and bringing in non-Nazis. We had them run this.

But also, something that many people are not aware of, that at that particular time, the entire 21st German field army under command of General von Tippelskirch surrendered to General Gavin, the 82nd Airborne. I believe in the entire history of warfare, this is the only case where an entire army surrendered to a single division.

And so we had there a large German staff, starting with the top general, and all his command was absolutely-- the structure was absolutely there. And in fact, I wouldn't say they were particularly arrogant, because they realized that would have been very unhealthy for them. But they certainly were well organized. And this military hierarchy and structure was preserved.

So the burial address was made by Major Woods. The people were being reburied. I myself was night and day busy looking for German shirkers, because I didn't want any single person there not to participate. And disinter with their own bare hands without gloves, which was our law that we laid down to them the rotting corpses.

In fact, they weren't rotting. There was nothing to rot. There was so little flesh on them. Out of the pits, bring them on

horse carts, and whatever way they could. Sometimes hand carts. To this garden, this park, to rebury them. You can imagine that this was not a very pleasant task.

And many Germans were hiding the most incredible cellars, and the little places, attics, and holes in the ground to get away from this. A yours truly, I was mercilessly handing them all, women, old men, children, everybody to do the job.

Many of my friends, of course, were helping. I wasn't doing this alone. Hundreds of our GIs were doing the same thing. And I'm sure that we still didn't find everybody. Most of them, but not everybody. Anyway, terror was reigning among the Germans, because my office, the G5, I was in direct contact daily-- daily, it's every minute of the day practically-- with the burgermeister, the mayor of Ludwigslust.

And in Ludwigslust was also the office of what the Germans called the Kreis, which is, say, a county government, and the Kreisleiter. That leader was there also. He was higher, much higher than the burgermeister, and much sharper and more intelligent fellow. I was spewing forth an uninterrupted stream of orders.

In fact, the first meeting we had when I came into the meeting room when they were so surprised to see the first American come in there, I told them that you are personally responsible if anything goes wrong. And I don't advise you to have anything allowed to get wrong, because it would not be healthy for you personally to incur my wrath, and the wrath of the 82nd Airborne.

In fact, I was not using the technical German translation of airborne, which means Luftlandtruppen. But I used the word parachute division. It's Fallschirmjager. Because that produced a great deal more obedience, more instantaneous response. The time lag was less than 5 seconds usually between issuing of an order and the beginning of its implementation.

And the mayor was really the chief executive officer of that little town, more than the Kreisleiter, who had more policy matters. And I was handing him also a lot. But really, the mayor was the focus of my attention, the focus of my CO's attention, and the focus of the G5 of the 82nd Airborne.

And it was not a very pleasant situation for him, because he was hardly ever disobedient. The first sign of disobedience, or let's not even say disobedience, but inadequate speed of responsiveness, because we expected, of course, as we used to have the saying in the 82nd Airborne, what's the difference between a trooper and a regular army unit?

Troopers have immediate and vigorous action. No matter what happens, immediate and vigorous action. You don't have to give specific orders like in the rest of the US Army. Troopers, you give an order, general order, and the troopers know that immediately and vigorously the objective is attained, whatever it is. Whether hill or three or five has to be taken, or whether the town has to be cleaned up, and whether the list of Nazis has to be submitted at 3 o'clock.

Anyway. At one point, just before the burial, the reburial of these concentration camp survivors, some German came in and told me that the mayor committed suicide. I said, where? He's at his home. Drove over there. And I saw that the mayor, his wife, and his daughter took poison, and they're dead in bed.

So said fine. Went back to the office. And told my commanding officer, sir, the mayor committed suicide. Let's get another mayor. And so Major Seward, of course, had heard the news already by radio telephone or something from somebody else before that. And he said, I already have a good candidate. Let me hear what you think of him, about him.

So he was sitting in the office there being talked with by Corporal Peters. And I saw-- see this white haired gentleman. And so I asked Peters, clue me in, who is this guy? And he said, he's some kind of a Social Democrat who was kicked out of office before.

And I said, well, that's just fine. And I said to monsieur, to me, it looks fine. So he was confirmed instantly, appointed the new mayor by the 82nd Airborne. So that's how he was the new mayor. The old mayor's demise had the effect more or less on me like maybe the rear tire on my Jeep went flat. It had to be fixed. And usually, I didn't fix tires myself anymore in those days. I'd just tell some German, and it was done.

Do you have any idea why they committed suicide?

Well, that was speculated about quite a bit. General Gavin in his book was wondering why would the mayor commit suicide when the town was taken by the 82nd Airborne without apparent reason? And he wrote that in his book. So I wrote him after reading this particular passage in his book.

I wrote General Gavin a report about this. And in this report, I said something like this. This was and is my opinion. This mayor was a Nazi. To me, he happened to be a temporarily useful fixture to run the administration, because he was experienced.

It was like having, let's say, a typewriter ribbon. The whole typewriter would not work if the ribbon didn't work. The mayor was the ribbon. But I knew that this ribbon was dirty, and I was going to change this ribbon as soon as I get a clean good black ribbon in the typewriter.

In other words, the minute that he could be replaced, he would be kicked out, and he would be pushed through the de-Nazification procedures, which we had, which was being handled by a specialized group of very competent fellows who were-- the Germans were very worried about that.

But what was happening, that every now and then, when the implementation of orders was not adequate by the mayor, I would tell him something like this. If you can't get this done, I'll find somebody who can. As an example, when we got into Ludwigslust. It was in the hour of my first meeting with him, I saw this beautiful castle.

And I thought that was fitting for General Gavin's headquarters. And so I wanted that. So I went and told the mayor, empty the castle. That will be 82nd Airborne HQ. So he came with some limp excuse that it can't be done because the call syndicate is there, has occupied the castle.

And he talked with a tremendous respect about this German call syndicate, which was the first time I ever heard of it. Shows you that we didn't know everything. But anyway, so I looked at him and said, if you can't get that done, I have seen that the windows are very big. I will have some of our men go in there, open all the windows, and throw out all the fixtures and people of the call syndicate that we don't need out of the windows to make sure that General Gavin's headquarters is ready this afternoon.

I forget how many hours I gave him. Maybe two or three hours. And I said, so you better get this thing done. Then I added that, and I used to add that as a standard procedure. If you don't get it done, I will swap you against somebody that the Red Army is holding who will get this job done, and you will wind up in the Red Army camp for Nazis.

This usually emptied all blood from his face. He turned ashen gray white. He would start choking. And usually the implementation of my orders proceeded instantly. I only had to say that, I believe I probably have said that no more than four times, but possibly only three times. It was enough. And he knew, of course, that I meant it, because I wasn't bluffing.

Now, there were rumors in Ludwigslust. Everybody who is in the army knows rumor mongering. And among the troopers, it's no different. And the most preposterous rumors of all was something so ridiculous that I didn't really want to pay attention to it. That was that this part of Germany on the right side of the Elbe was going to be given over to the Red Army.

This was, in my opinion, so preposterous that one couldn't really seriously waste any time thinking about such ridiculously stupid rumors. That territory taken by the 82nd Airborne would be given to the Red Army? Unthinkable. Well, the mayor committed suicide.

This has little to do with a concentration camp. But indeed, a month or month and a half after we took Ludwigslust, the British military government team came in. Three or four men. I remember there was a major in charge to take over from the 82nd Airborne.

And I heard him say, this is only for a few days, because they're going to transfer this to the Red Army. Already before that, we saw it for the first time in my life, something with a name I had never heard before, which is probably in the history of the end of World War II to this day the most important name of all.

And that was in connection was the fact that the 82nd liberated besides the concentration camp inmates some 84,000 prisoners of war that the Red Army lost to the Germans. So we liberated these Red Army officers, and men, 84,000 approximately. Now, that's a lot of people.

I have assembled them all one day in front of me at the airport-- little airfield, not airport. It's a military Luftwaffe airfield outside of Ludwigslust-- to announce them this breathtaking news that they were going to be repatriated. Because a few hours before that, my CO called me in and said, Linton, these are orders that just came in. Read this.

Read it. It was maybe two or three lines, in typical terse army lingo. It said something to the effect that pursuant to the Yalta agreement, all Red Army prisoners of war shall be repatriated forthwith to the Soviet Union and transferred to the command of the Red Army command. To be implemented, and they gave, I think, something like two or three days.

So I said, pursuant to Yalta? What is Yalta? Never heard of it. After all, you know, we were soldiers in the 82nd Airborne. We had nothing to do with Yalta. We didn't even know really that Roosevelt had been there, although we read. It was in the press, but we didn't pay attention. We were more worried where the next machine gun nest was.

And so we've heard that, indeed, the Red Army men were repatriated according to the Yalta agreement. And the right side of the Elbe was part of the Soviet occupation territory that rightfully belonged to the Red Army, even though the 82nd has taken it. And this incredible thing, for a troop at least incredible, that that area was going to be given to the Red Army, turned out to be true.

But these rumors were beginning to circulate, and the Germans were scared to death. And I think that the mayor just couldn't take it, and collapsed. And in true German Teutonic mastery of the family told his wife and his daughter that they better come along, and they committed suicide. That's how I piece it together.

Anyway, the German administration, reluctantly and dragging their heels, helped us save quite a few of the German-- of the concentration camp survivors. We gradually organized with the Belgians, with the French repatriation convoys that came to pick them up, and within 10 days or two weeks, most of the survivors had gone and were repatriated.

As a slight interlude, I might add that one thing that I did-- how small the world is really. The railroad station of Ludwigslust was not bombed. And I looked at it quickly. There was nobody in there. And I saw it was a very well-built, as old German railroad stations usually are, solidly built to last for centuries. Walls that must have been a meter thick. Solid.

And the offices of the station master and the other offices were left with ink, there with pencils laying on work papers that they just abandoned in a frenzy. And I thought this was a good spot where to bring a couple of the survivors who I felt needed to be nursed back to life, because we quickly learned that it's very easy to kill people through ignorance.

And I did that also, and several of our troopers did this. When we saw these emaciated ambulatory corpses, our instinct was to grab our candy bar and give them Oh Henry!, which I remember to this day I have given to somebody there. And he started munching on this chocolate bar, and in front of me collapsed and died in agony.

I saw a GI, a friend of mine, who was in the kitchen. He came with a can of condensed milk, an [? OD ?] can, olive drab colored can, but typical condensed milk. He saw this group standing there of survivors. Pulled out his bayonet, made two holes in the can and gave it to them. And they started drinking this rich milk, and the same thing. Died in front of us within minutes.

In awfully painful agony. Well, you know, you see, you do that twice, you don't do it the third time. I did it once and my friend did it once. That was it. We learned very quickly, don't feed them. Let's get some medical advice how to feed

them. We just don't know how to feed them.

But one thing we'd learned is that there comes a point in their life when they don't want to live any more. And we call them zombies. Because they're emaciated. Their eyes are bulging, because all the skin, all the flesh collapses in, and the eyes usually are huge and beady. They look right through you with these sad huge eyes.

They don't care about anything. They've lost the will to live. There is nothing worse than that, because you can't cope with it. And they will die, even though they're free. We could give them some food. But they would die. So a small group of French survivors in this camp asked me how come you speak so fluently French.

I told them that I went to school in France. And I told them, look, two of them were in fair shape. Emaciated and all, but alert and full of vinegar. And one or two of the Frenchmen were not. They became zombies and were going to die within a day or two.

So I told them, why don't you take them in the railroad station. I'll bring you food, and see if you can help this friend of yours. And indeed, after a few days, they nursed this fellow back from most corpse-like appearance to where this fellow, his eyes were focusing and looking at my eyes.

And I could see that he was going to probably make it. And then he asked me, how come you speak French like that? Of course, we were talking French. So I said, well I went to Lycée Saint-- Saint Bernard. I went there too. And talking a brief time, we realized we were in the same class.

He did not recognize me. And I certainly did not recognize him. But we knew by the teachers we had and the other, some of the other students, especially the rowdies with whom I had the tendency to associate there, and he was more among the more studious fellows. We were in the same class. What a small world.

And he was repatriated. Unfortunately, I didn't keep his name and lost track of him. But I do have contacts with some other survivors from Wobbelin. And it fills me with an incredible satisfaction and joy to see these men alive, because I know, and they know that had the 82nd Airborne not, in other words, General Gavin agreed or convinced General Eisenhower that the 82nd Airborne should cross the Elbe over there, they would not have made it.

What are your feelings about the American response generally to the concentration camps in that period? Did they know, do you think, what was happening? Or did they not know and come upon it suddenly? I'll try to separate all the things that I read about after the war, because I was deeply interested, how could it be that we, at least the 82nd, didn't know that Wobbelin was there? There was Dachau. There were God knows how many other camps.

And I believe, from remembering so vividly my days as a GI in one of the active outfits in the war-- the 82nd Airborne was really-- of course, we always say this. The 82nd Airborne, and then all the rest of the Army units and quality. We were very modest.

But I don't think that the full story of concentration camps was very well known, and certainly not very well believed until the evidence started being seen by actual physical penetration into the insides of these camps.

I must say that I myself, I knew. I was in Germany. I was in France before as a youngster. I went to school there. I heard that there was something horrible, the KZ. This was the German abbreviation for concentration camp. Even I as a kid, I knew that there was something to be, something unpleasant and dangerous, and something you don't want to dig into this KZ business.

That's where you wind up if you get caught, or if this or that happens to you, and then you disappear, or people disappear, and they wind up there. So you don't want to know too much about it. Now, of course, what I as a 12-year-old youngster was feeling, as compared to President Roosevelt with all the intelligence apparatus of the embassies-- this was, of course, preceding the days of the CIA, or the more thoroughly organized intelligence organizations.

Still, the State Department had an intelligence operation. The army and the military attachés had their. But they were,

of course, very provincial. The military attaché during the Hitler days was probably more interested to know about the German tank production and whether the Germans were producing binoculars for their artillery, and therefore calculate how many artillery pieces they were putting together if they could get the number of their range finders calculated.

I don't think that they knew quite the extent of what it was all about, because it's something that is incredible. It is simply not believable that in a highly technologically advanced, one of the leading nations on the globe of this Earth in 1933-- certainly, Germany, the United States, Great Britain, France, these were the leading countries-- that they could decimate people by starvation, gassing them, and burning them in crematoria.

So I don't think they knew enough about it, about them not bombing the rail lines. I can very well understand that the Strategic Air Command could very well in their disbelief of this ridiculous rumor, in quotation marks, that what they were hearing. That it was more important to bomb the ball-bearing works in Schweinfurt to immobilize the production of engines for the war, than to bomb railroads in those areas where there's hardly anything really very active looking. Just a relatively small plant.

The crematoria. They were not producing as much smoke I must say as a tank factory, or a steel mill. So I think that there was sad ignorance, inadequate belief in things that were definitely could be learned more about. And later, when the war was going on, we began to hear this. And we saw first where the 82nd was in one place, we were holding Cologne, because Patton encircled the Ruhr pocket, and it was expected that the Germans would break out through Cologne out of Patton's encirclement.

And so the 8nd was sent there to make sure that the Germans wouldn't break out. 13,000 men to hold 360,000 in. We thought these were proper odds. But lo and behold, we began to have pictures, reliable photographs of concentration camp crematoria. I believe Dachau was liberated at the time when we were in--

They immediately posted them on the walls of our military government office of the 82nd Airborne. And Germans who came for relief into our office really were coming to the wrong place, because we gave them a lecture about what Untermenschen were like, and showed them the concentration camp pictures. But this was already 1945.

I don't think that our leaders, or I can't imagine that our leaders really were very well clued in, in 1943 or '44, because I can't believe that a president like Roosevelt, who was able to have Kaiser build Liberty ships almost every day, one was being launched, every 12 hours was being launched, that he couldn't then do something about this inhuman behavior and help people in such distress.

It wasn't only a question of the Jewish problem. Of course, the Jewish race got the brunt of it from the Germans because Hitler unleashed his subhuman attention against the Jews, and antisemitism has been rampant all over the world, and is still quite rampant in many parts of the world.

So for the Germans, or the Nazis rather, it was an easy point to pick to get a large mass of the Germans to side with them in silence because they're going, after all, it's only Jews that they're going to deal with. They didn't say they were going to exterminate. Even to the end, Eichmann, they didn't say that they were going to exterminate them. It was the end solution.

The Germans are so methodical that they take things very literally. End solution for the average German in the street doesn't mean that the German nation is going to exterminate another race or attempt to do that. Obviously, they failed. They couldn't quite make-- they went a long ways, but not completely. The state of Israel exists because so many survived. Enough survived to form a state.

But I think this incredible missing of what the Nazis did was the result of inadequate knowledge, inadequate attention to this particular thing. There were so many other problems. After all, all of Poland was being subjugated, where the cavalry regiments were attacking German tank units and being mowed down by machine guns from absolutely well protected Germans behind several inches of steel.



I think we didn't focus adequately. Now, of course, everybody says, oh, we should have known better. We should have known. We in the 82nd, I should have known better. I didn't know. We came in there, it was a tremendous sad surprise to find out that there was a place like Wöbbelin. I never knew that Wöbbelin existed.

I had to find it on a map just where it was. It was a tiny place. It was in the way to Parchim, a few kilometers north, northeast of Ludwigslust. Unheard of on the map. We thought we were pretty well-informed about that area that we attacked. But we didn't know that. A lot of things, people don't know, which is dreadful.

Do you talk a great deal about it today?

Not so much, I must say. what-- in the last few years, I met a group of survivors from Wöbbelin. We became acquainted. When I see them, I'm happy to see that there's still people alive. The numbers are getting smaller from old age and sickness and so forth.

But what amazes me more than almost anything is that, in general, concentration camp survivors-- and I've seen survivors, I've dealt literally with thousands of survivors. Because of Berlin, one of my functions was security in displaced persons camps. And so I had to screen literally thousands of people who were formerly in concentration camps.

I talked with so many. I must say what amazes me is that so few of them are vengeful. I am more outraged personally at what the Nazis have done, and I would like to see bloody revenge, if possible at all, against the guilty, which hasn't been forthcoming, than the survivors themselves.

So sometimes when I think about this, and I talk to people and I tell them, look, the guilty haven't been punished. Only about 10 people were executed for war crimes at the end of one of the worst wars in history. 50 million people were killed by the war, in general, give and take, give or take 5 million either way.

But the number is pretty hard. 50 million is really pretty much it. 10 people get executed for that? 9,000 Germans on the whole were tried for war crimes. That is ridiculous. The Germans now, the post-war Germans, of course they are now a democracy, more or less US style democracy. The elections and so forth. And they try to be decent human beings.

But how come that their judicial system has dragged their heels so, so efficiently and not found the guilty ones? This most methodical of all nations, outside perhaps the Japanese. But the Germans certainly are among the most methodical of all peoples. Most thorough.

To say something is German means it is efficient, it is well organized, it is well done. How can a nation like that not want to take from the US army the document center in Berlin, which is the entire archive of the Nazi membership party, with photographs, curriculum vitae, and everything. They have dragged their heels. And I think there is some guilt for that.

Mr. Linton, thank you very much for your story.

OK.