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INTERVIEWER: FRED CRAWFORD  
CAMP: DACHAU  
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[This interview was originally recorded on videotape. This transcript is taken from that videotape.]

A: As you know, my name is Bill Quinn. I'm a Lieutenant General, Retired, in the United States Army. I'm a Marylander. I was born in Crisfield, Maryland on the first of November, 1907. I went to West Point and went through the grades to Lieutenant General. In connection with Dachau, I think the story goes back to planning for the invasion of southern France. At that time, I was the G-2 of the 7th Army, commanded by General Alexander Patch. Before and during the planning phase, intelligence relating to Dachau came to our attention as well as the other camps, but we had no real concept of what went on inside Dachau. When we landed in southern France and went up the Rhone Valley, we realized we were going to be on the Rhine side of the river when we crossed the Rhine and probably would go to the south and hence we would go to Dachau. Overrun it, probably, which we did. So I then took a special interest in Dachau, and I had my German and Polish prisoners who were inducted into the German Army interrogated, among other things, about Dachau, besides the order of battle of the German forces. So we were about to take it, and I had instructions out to intelligence units that as soon as it was liberated or about to be liberated to let me know through channels. In the late afternoon of April 19 of that year, I received word that Dachau had been taken, our forces were there, and the camp was under the control of the International Committee.

Q: Yes sir. I think we mean April 29.

A: April 29th. Yes. What did I say? The 28th?

Q: The 19th.

A: The 19th!

Q: We lost ten days, but it was April 29, 1945.

A: So on the eve of April 29th I received word that Dachau had been liberated and the camp was under the control of the International Prisoners Committee. I think it was headed by a British Major named O'Leary, if I'm not mistaken. When I received this information, I decided I would be there early in the morning, which I was. And I proceeded to Dachau with some of my officers in the 7th Army, such as our prisoner of war chief, Major Kobawa. One of his staff people wrote the article in there in the BWB section of the 7th Army. I had a representative from the OSS, the Office of Strategic Services, which was headed by General Wild Bill Donovan, and I also had a group from my counter-intelligence corps division which was operating under my jurisdiction as G-2 of the 7th Army. What I saw there, of course, is revealed in the document that I have here which I published. I published this because I felt that this thing had to be documented, that the future should have something that was the truth and the truth then, not necessarily something that I would write about later in life. Due to the fact that it was too big for me, I then commissioned each of those three divisions -- that is, the Office of Strategic Services -- to do...and I specified what they were to do. One was to take the camp; the other was to take the townspeople; the other was to take the organization and what happened and then to interrogate the internees. And as you've seen in this, one of the most dramatic elements of this document has to do with the diary of E.K. This is a fascinating story. So a team of each of these organizations went to work, and they came up with three [reports with] some duplication, but not enough to

matter. When I read the three reports, I decided it was too big and I didn't have the time to put it all together so I decided to let each one of them tell their own story in their own way and I would do an introduction. Dr. Crawford, you were there the same day. You saw the same thing.

Q: Yes sir.

A: And having been a prisoner of war yourself, you realized just what the internees there went through. Before you ask me any questions, I would just like to read to you the foreword that I wrote in April 1945 of this document. "Dachau, 1933-1945, will stand for all time as one of history's most gruesome symbols of inhumanity. There our troops found sights, sounds, and stench horrible beyond belief. Cruelties so enormous as to be incomprehensible to the normal mind. Dachau and death were synonymous." I think another part is a summary of the OSS, the first paragraph of it.

Q: I think the rest of your statement, General, is just as crucial as all of them. If you don't mind, read the rest of your foreword because it does carry the message even further.

A: All right. I will do that.

Q: Thank you, sir.

A: This is the second paragraph in this foreword: "No words or pictures can carry the full impact of these unbelievable scenes. But this report presents some of the outstanding facts and photographs in order to emphasize the type of crime which elements of the SS committed thousands of times a day, to remind us of the ghastly capabilities of certain classes of men to strengthen our determination that they and their works shall vanish from the earth." Then, another aspect had to do with the minds of the men, and that I can summarize by the summary written by the OSS section of the 7th Army. "At Dachau, the only objective of the inmates was to survive under the most primitive and cruel conditions which

constantly threatened their sanity and their physical existence. Little more than this was humanly possible. As a result of these abnormal conditions, this camp of 30,000 men cannot be compared to the structure of any normal society; differentiated, that is, by social classes, political, religious or professional affiliations. Hence, neither normal moral standards nor normal political or sociological criteria are applicable to the Dachau situation." I think, probably, it would behoove anybody who sees this film, to attempt, Doctor, to get a copy of this for their own edification.

Q: Absolutely.

A: And, I repeat once again, this is the truth.

Q: And this is the document that you authorized.

A: I published.

Q: You conceived of it and published it so when we hold this document up, people will understand that you are the person who gave this to the world.

A: That's right. If I am going to get an accolade for it, I want to mention the people in the back who put this together. The composition was the work of Major Al House, who just died not too long ago. He designed the cover, his concept of the SS. He did the artwork in the "townspeople" area of the German with the pipe and those drawings. The artwork was also done by John Denny and the copy preparation by Charles Denny. The photographs were the 163rd Signal Photo Company and the printing done by the 649th Engineer Compo. Battalion. This was done in the 7th Army, with government funds, so it's a free document and there is no copyright to it and anybody can reproduce it at their will.

Q: And that's the secret: to get it out to as many people as possible. One of the reasons we wanted so strongly for you to give this testimony is the charge that has appeared, for example, in *The Spotlight* of March 23, 1981, in a sense saying that Dachau did not have a gas chamber, that Dachau did not murder people

intentionally. In other words, refuting what many of us saw with our own eyes. Would you be able to tell us what you did see in terms of the gas chamber, what you heard about it, and also the shooting places. The *scheissenstands*.

A: When I arrived in Dachau, I came in a jeep with some others, as I told you, through the main gate. I think the main gate had a sign on it that "Work will free one."

Q: *Arbeit macht frei*

A: Right. There was an M.P. there and, of course, there were bodies all around. The SS guards who had been shot were still laying by the towers and wherever they had fallen. Some of the inmates had been killed by their fellow inmates for their cruelty. Everything was status quo -- as it happened -- so I saw it first hand, very early in the morning after the night before when it had been captured. As I told you earlier, the thing that probably impressed me more than anything else was the boxcars and the flatcars. I think there were almost 35 or 40 of them. Just loaded with human bodies. Most of them Jews, at this particular point in time. And all naked. They apparently had been carted from Warsaw or someplace in these boxcars, and the flatcars, of course, were stacked with human bodies. The boxcars were open and when the doors opened, the ones that were dead next to the door fell out on the ground. As I walked past, and I could see inside the boxcars, just nothing but naked human bodies. As to the gas chamber, this was a very, very, clever system they had in which they would herd the ones that were alive and this was their basic system of extermination. They would bring them into this place and there's the crematorium -- and I think it was even next door or adjoining -- and hand these prisoners a towel and a bar of soap and tell them to walk in that room which the signs says "Showers". There were shower heads in there in the ceiling, not on the walls like in a normal shower room, but no water came out. Just gas. And so within 10 minutes they could kill up to 500 people

and then they were put into the crematorium where they were shoved, three or four bodies at a time, into the furnaces so they could burn people up. I don't know what the capacity was but enormous. And then, of course, when it got so big, and so many people, they had them dig ditches and then murdered and thrown in the ditches and dirt piled up, I think. There's a marker there, I believe, now. Is it 10,000?

Q: One of the mass graves, that's right. Is there any question in your own mind that that gas chamber was actually used to murder people?

A: Let's put it this way. I don't know. I don't know, because I wasn't there. I'm only reporting the testimony of some of the inmates which is in this book. They were interrogated by my prisoner of war section.

Q: But you did see that room. You saw those false shower heads up there.

A: I did see the room. That's exactly right. Yes.

Q: At the time you saw it, the room was without bodies in it, if I'm not mistaken?

A: That is true; it was clean.

Q: So, if they were going to just store bodies in it, why would they have left that area without bodies?

A: That's true. There were no bodies in there, no.

Q: At that time which says to me that they had been using it for gassing very recently. What about the killing places? The three places....

A: I don't remember them.

[Interruption in tape. Conversation resumes as follows]

A: They're looking at a copy of the book. And one of them is Edgar Rupfer and the Reverend Martin Niemoller. It says: "The two looking over Rupfer's manuscript on Dachau..." -- it calls it a manuscript -- "...attending the World Council of Churches Assembly." And that was in Illinois. The other is "And some of them

got their come-uppance. There's a Dachau ruler given life for camp crimes.”

Q: Who was one of the inmates who...

A: He was, yes. He's Egon Zill, former Deputy Commander of Dachau.

Q: Oh.

A: Yes. He escaped and went up and got a job with the British as a driver in the British Army of the Rhine, and somehow -- I don't know how he tripped -- they caught him. He was a former Lieutenant Colonel in Hitler's SS elite guard, whose methods of torture were described by the court -- this is a German court -- as worse than in the Middle Ages. This is what the German judge [said], so he was given life for his particular...and I don't know what else happened as far as the German courts were concerned with the others. Maybe you do.

Q: What else do you remember about those days at Dachau? Did you stay there very long?

A: No. I just went down to see it.

Q: And to start the investigation.

A: The impact was so great that I decided to do this and so my section did what I recently told you -- put it all together and I had the Engineers print 10,000 copies and I had a stack of them but everybody kept saying: "I'd like to have one."

Q: They are amazing.

A: This one is my last one and I am guarding this one.

Q: Absolutely. Could you tell us whether the average American soldier had an impact when they saw Dachau? We have a newspaper from the 45th Division which says "Dachau Tells Us Why We Fight", and it indicates that the American soldier got angry when he saw the inhumanity of the concentration camp.

A: Yes. The average soldier did not have the intelligence that I had on Dachau, and I didn't have as much intelligence as I found when I went there on Dachau. As

my foreword says: "It's beyond comprehension" for a mind that is not oriented toward brutality. So the average American kid, I think, was absolutely stunned and shocked and maybe didn't believe it. There's an element of disbelief, as this article points out.

Q: Still.

A: Yes. Still.

Q: You mentioned the fact that evidently most of the bodies in that train were Jews. Could you tell whether there were any Jews left alive in the Dachau camp?

A: Yes. There were and it's published in here. The number of Jews in the camp on liberation was 2,539, including 225 women.

Q: And that is the real census of the camp that was taken.

A: Yes. It was.

Q: It also tells us where most of the other inmates come from. For example: German nationals, there were a thousand.

A: Eleven hundred and they were criminals.

Q: Right. These were the regular criminals.

A: Yes, they were. That is, most of them. I guess maybe Hitler threw some people in there....

Q: Some of these ministers, like this Niemoller. He's a very famous man and he resisted Hitler too late, but he wound up in that camp and did you see any other ministers? Did you see any priests?

A: No, I didn't personally. My section did.

Q: They talk about 9,000 Poles; they talk about almost 4,000 Frenchmen. These were really political prisoners, were they not?

A: Yes, they were.

Q: These were not prisoners of war.

A: No, they were not prisoners of war. They were political prisoners. They were

not criminals and they wore the red....

Q: Triangle.

A: Yes, the red triangle. And the criminals, I guess, wore a green symbol. But when you think of a quarter of a million people having gone to this camp, it is just unbelievable.

Q: Some of the other evidence that your men were able to come up with was the fact that 25,000 Jews were murdered in Dachau, both by gassing and by being shot in the back of the head and that's one of the facts that's presented so clearly in this document. So we do accept this in the true historical contribution it makes, and we are deeply grateful to you for sharing this testimony.

A: It was done on the spot. It was done within one week, roughly, maybe two weeks, of interrogations. I'm not too sure how long it took. There are no dates in this, you see, and I didn't date it as when it was published and I probably should have.

Q: At the time, you were still fighting a war.

A: Yes, we were.

Q: Because the war wasn't over until the 8th of May.

A: That's right.

Q: And you were in hot pursuit of that enemy who was killing our own men even then.

A: That's correct. But I published this in early June, or maybe late May, because I left the 7th Army with General Patch to go to the Pacific on the 10th of June. He was ordered to take an Army...but it didn't materialize because [of] the atomic bomb. I took a stack of these home with me, so it had to be done around the first of June or maybe earlier. But I issued this to the troops. This was not for circulation to the press. The press got copies of it, because it was in the Press Room, but I sent it to Corps and Divisions for distribution to whoever they

wanted to give it to. That's how I got it down into the hands of some of the troops, because it didn't come back to the States. It was for the 7th Army troops. I sent copies also to the other G-2's who had the same kind of thing in Auschwitz and some of the other camps so that they would know that we had a "biggie" down there in the 7th Army.

Q: We are deeply grateful to you for sharing this with us and making it possible to tell the truth today.

A: How did you find me?

Q: We found you because of the name in that foreword. And we, through Senator Sam Nunn's office, called the Pentagon and just curious to see where you were and they were kind enough to give us your telephone number and that's how I called you and you have given us a unique and important part of the work we're doing. Thank you so very much.

A: I'm delighted to help.