

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:23,700

2  
00:00:23,700 --> 00:00:24,490  
Quiet, please.

3  
00:00:24,490 --> 00:00:27,030

4  
00:00:27,030 --> 00:00:29,190  
Tape is rolling.

5  
00:00:29,190 --> 00:00:31,050  
Kyra, start anytime.

6  
00:00:31,050 --> 00:00:34,050  
This is a continuation of  
a United States Holocaust

7  
00:00:34,050 --> 00:00:38,130  
Memorial Museum with  
Anthony Acevedo.

8  
00:00:38,130 --> 00:00:41,070  
So tell me what it was  
like the first time

9  
00:00:41,070 --> 00:00:45,090  
you saw the Germans in  
battle or when you first

10  
00:00:45,090 --> 00:00:45,830  
came across them.

11  
00:00:45,830 --> 00:00:55,820

12  
00:00:55,820 --> 00:00:56,795  
When I came across--

13

00:00:56,795 --> 00:01:00,170

14

00:01:00,170 --> 00:01:04,400

that's with reference to  
before, being captured?

15

00:01:04,400 --> 00:01:08,450

Whenever-- in  
battle or after you

16

00:01:08,450 --> 00:01:12,740

were captured or your  
first experience with them.

17

00:01:12,740 --> 00:01:19,970

Well, the experience  
was when they

18

00:01:19,970 --> 00:01:24,560

were being shot at that cave.

19

00:01:24,560 --> 00:01:31,160

And then, one of the  
Germans decided to escape.

20

00:01:31,160 --> 00:01:37,400

And yet he had a rifle that he  
was going to shoot one of us.

21

00:01:37,400 --> 00:01:41,840

And one of our fellows  
happened to be a sharp shooter

22

00:01:41,840 --> 00:01:49,160

and at 400 feet  
away blew his head.

23

00:01:49,160 --> 00:01:50,840

The German's head?

24

00:01:50,840 --> 00:01:56,410

The American blew his head up.

25  
00:01:56,410 --> 00:01:58,430  
And that was my  
experience of seeing

26  
00:01:58,430 --> 00:01:59,690  
something go up in the air.

27  
00:01:59,690 --> 00:02:02,850

28  
00:02:02,850 --> 00:02:04,320  
How'd you feel about that?

29  
00:02:04,320 --> 00:02:06,390  
What was your reaction?

30  
00:02:06,390 --> 00:02:09,150  
It was a feeling of--

31  
00:02:09,150 --> 00:02:11,790  
I says, oh, my God.

32  
00:02:11,790 --> 00:02:13,460  
But it had to happen.

33  
00:02:13,460 --> 00:02:15,910  
It's either he or us.

34  
00:02:15,910 --> 00:02:18,150  
Mm-hmm.

35  
00:02:18,150 --> 00:02:20,070  
And you mentioned  
being in a cave.

36  
00:02:20,070 --> 00:02:22,740  
Were you in a cave, or  
were these the foxholes

37  
00:02:22,740 --> 00:02:24,180

you were captured in?

38

00:02:24,180 --> 00:02:25,380

They were in a cave.

39

00:02:25,380 --> 00:02:27,750

They were hidden.

40

00:02:27,750 --> 00:02:32,880

There were six Germans with  
machine guns hid in a cave.

41

00:02:32,880 --> 00:02:37,440

And they were waiting  
for our group, company.

42

00:02:37,440 --> 00:02:39,073

This was way before  
you got captured.

43

00:02:39,073 --> 00:02:39,990

This is when you fell.

44

00:02:39,990 --> 00:02:42,390

Yeah, yeah.

45

00:02:42,390 --> 00:02:44,370

And after the  
Germans captured you

46

00:02:44,370 --> 00:02:47,040

guys, how did they treat you?

47

00:02:47,040 --> 00:02:48,750

Were you worried  
that they were going

48

00:02:48,750 --> 00:02:53,310

to treat you the way  
that some of your buddies

49

00:02:53,310 --> 00:02:55,020

had treated them?

50

00:02:55,020 --> 00:02:58,290

We didn't know the way the  
Germans would treat us.

51

00:02:58,290 --> 00:03:09,090

But we would forced  
to get our shoes off.

52

00:03:09,090 --> 00:03:17,250

And one company  
commander of the Germans,

53

00:03:17,250 --> 00:03:24,230

before I headed to  
the truck, I didn't

54

00:03:24,230 --> 00:03:36,320

know that he had a background  
on me when he saw me as a medic.

55

00:03:36,320 --> 00:03:43,400

Because he says, stick  
with us, and I'll

56

00:03:43,400 --> 00:03:47,120

see that you go to  
University of Munich.

57

00:03:47,120 --> 00:03:48,865

I'll take you to Munich.

58

00:03:48,865 --> 00:03:51,140

Did he say that  
to you in German?

59

00:03:51,140 --> 00:03:51,860

In English.

60

00:03:51,860 --> 00:03:54,410

61

00:03:54,410 --> 00:04:02,060

And it was very strange for him  
to tell me that, to offer me.

62

00:04:02,060 --> 00:04:05,670

Why did he offer you that?

63

00:04:05,670 --> 00:04:08,700

Because-- I don't know.

64

00:04:08,700 --> 00:04:09,540

I didn't know.

65

00:04:09,540 --> 00:04:13,020

66

00:04:13,020 --> 00:04:20,130

But I told him I'm a medic,  
and I'll stick with my buddies.

67

00:04:20,130 --> 00:04:22,920

So we headed back.

68

00:04:22,920 --> 00:04:26,370

I mean, he sent us  
to that prison camp

69

00:04:26,370 --> 00:04:28,560

called Bad Orb Stalag IX-B.

70

00:04:28,560 --> 00:04:30,277

How did you get to Bad Orb?

71

00:04:30,277 --> 00:04:31,110

You rode the trucks?

72

00:04:31,110 --> 00:04:32,070

The trucks.

73

00:04:32,070 --> 00:04:33,510

The whole way to the camp?

74  
00:04:33,510 --> 00:04:34,650  
To the camp.

75  
00:04:34,650 --> 00:04:36,700  
It was two, three  
miles from there.

76  
00:04:36,700 --> 00:04:40,830

77  
00:04:40,830 --> 00:04:45,180  
What were your first  
impressions when you arrived?

78  
00:04:45,180 --> 00:04:55,380  
Well, we were scared,  
yet we were blah, like--

79  
00:04:55,380 --> 00:04:56,280  
You were numb.

80  
00:04:56,280 --> 00:04:59,820  
--why did this happen to us?

81  
00:04:59,820 --> 00:05:05,715  
And they tossed us  
into these barracks.

82  
00:05:05,715 --> 00:05:10,020

83  
00:05:10,020 --> 00:05:17,300  
And they interrogated  
us and gave us

84  
00:05:17,300 --> 00:05:18,890  
a number, a prison number.

85  
00:05:18,890 --> 00:05:22,130  
How many of you were  
there, in your group,

86  
00:05:22,130 --> 00:05:23,300  
that arrived at the camp?

87  
00:05:23,300 --> 00:05:26,520

88  
00:05:26,520 --> 00:05:31,620  
I couldn't remember  
exactly the group number.

89  
00:05:31,620 --> 00:05:38,310  
Because since the  
German divided us--

90  
00:05:38,310 --> 00:05:43,800  
all privates into one  
section, PFCs in one section,

91  
00:05:43,800 --> 00:05:50,160  
and then sergeants and  
corporals go to another section.

92  
00:05:50,160 --> 00:05:51,870  
And what was your  
rank at the time?

93  
00:05:51,870 --> 00:05:54,600  
My rank was PFC.  
But I didn't know

94  
00:05:54,600 --> 00:05:58,500  
that I was already a corporal.

95  
00:05:58,500 --> 00:06:00,360  
I found that out afterwards.

96  
00:06:00,360 --> 00:06:01,630  
So you were with the PFCs.

97  
00:06:01,630 --> 00:06:03,150  
It was PFCs.



98

00:06:03,150 --> 00:06:06,660  
Did you see any other prisoners  
when you arrived at Bad Orb,

99

00:06:06,660 --> 00:06:07,480  
at Stalag IX-B?

100

00:06:07,480 --> 00:06:09,570  
Yeah.

101

00:06:09,570 --> 00:06:16,290  
That prison camp was  
composed of about close

102

00:06:16,290 --> 00:06:18,298  
to 40,000 prisoners--

103

00:06:18,298 --> 00:06:19,590  
But they weren't all Americans.

104

00:06:19,590 --> 00:06:29,860  
--Americans, English, Spaniards,  
South Africans, Arabs.

105

00:06:29,860 --> 00:06:30,950  
They had all.

106

00:06:30,950 --> 00:06:31,530  
OK.

107

00:06:31,530 --> 00:06:35,040  
And you were first  
registered by-- who

108

00:06:35,040 --> 00:06:36,690  
registered you into the camp?

109

00:06:36,690 --> 00:06:41,310  
Commanding officers had a table.

110

00:06:41,310 --> 00:06:43,240  
Were they Germans  
who registered you?

111  
00:06:43,240 --> 00:06:44,190  
Yes.

112  
00:06:44,190 --> 00:06:48,810  
And what did they ask you  
when you got up to the table?

113  
00:06:48,810 --> 00:06:57,540  
Just my name and give you your  
number, your registered number.

114  
00:06:57,540 --> 00:06:58,770  
Do you remember your number?

115  
00:06:58,770 --> 00:07:02,040  
Yes-- 27016.

116  
00:07:02,040 --> 00:07:05,670  
And I have it in my  
license plate to my car.

117  
00:07:05,670 --> 00:07:08,730  
The six is not in there because  
it doesn't fit the plate.

118  
00:07:08,730 --> 00:07:11,850

119  
00:07:11,850 --> 00:07:14,940  
And what happened after they  
registered you into the camp?

120  
00:07:14,940 --> 00:07:20,110  
Then they selected you to  
go to one of the barracks.

121  
00:07:20,110 --> 00:07:22,270  
You go into the barracks,  
and you stay in there

122  
00:07:22,270 --> 00:07:25,980  
until they tell  
you, in the groups,

123  
00:07:25,980 --> 00:07:33,510  
to come out for feeding or  
for war indoctrination, what

124  
00:07:33,510 --> 00:07:35,370  
they wanted to do to you.

125  
00:07:35,370 --> 00:07:36,030  
Such as what?

126  
00:07:36,030 --> 00:07:38,430  
What were some of the things  
they wanted to do to you?

127  
00:07:38,430 --> 00:07:42,160

128  
00:07:42,160 --> 00:07:45,460  
Just make you stand  
out there in the cold.

129  
00:07:45,460 --> 00:07:48,220  
And they didn't say nothing--

130  
00:07:48,220 --> 00:07:52,780  
absolutely nothing,  
just to control you.

131  
00:07:52,780 --> 00:07:59,150  
And so then, they don't want you  
to do nothing, to say nothing.

132  
00:07:59,150 --> 00:08:03,940  
Otherwise, you'll be punished if  
you did something out of order.

133  
00:08:03,940 --> 00:08:09,100

Were you ever interrogated  
while in Stalag IX-B?

134

00:08:09,100 --> 00:08:19,480  
Until one day, it happened about  
a week later, after captured.

135

00:08:19,480 --> 00:08:23,620

136

00:08:23,620 --> 00:08:30,100  
We were all inside,  
lying down on the floor.

137

00:08:30,100 --> 00:08:35,110  
And we heard the chains  
of the gate, the door.

138

00:08:35,110 --> 00:08:36,159  
In the barracks?

139

00:08:36,159 --> 00:08:38,902  
In the front door, to open.

140

00:08:38,902 --> 00:08:40,360  
Open the barracks  
or open the camp?

141

00:08:40,360 --> 00:08:42,010  
The barracks.

142

00:08:42,010 --> 00:08:53,060  
And in walks two guards with  
machine guns and, behind them,

143

00:08:53,060 --> 00:08:57,620  
a tall official Gestapo.

144

00:08:57,620 --> 00:09:00,770

145

00:09:00,770 --> 00:09:06,180

And he looked to me.

146  
00:09:06,180 --> 00:09:08,060  
You thought, my God.

147  
00:09:08,060 --> 00:09:14,510  
We all looked at him, and is  
he a movie star or something?

148  
00:09:14,510 --> 00:09:16,250  
And we're  
[FAKE SUPPRESSED LAUGHTER]

149  
00:09:16,250 --> 00:09:19,760  
like that, trying to laugh.

150  
00:09:19,760 --> 00:09:26,030  
But anyway, we acted a little  
asleep or something like that,

151  
00:09:26,030 --> 00:09:28,980  
that we didn't know nothing  
about what was happening.

152  
00:09:28,980 --> 00:09:31,700  
And he walked around.

153  
00:09:31,700 --> 00:09:44,420  
He had a monocle and a cigarette  
tip and a hat, a big, long,

154  
00:09:44,420 --> 00:09:46,970  
black coat-- leather coat--

155  
00:09:46,970 --> 00:09:52,900  
down to just below  
his knees, boots--

156  
00:09:52,900 --> 00:09:55,710  
very artistic looking  
type of person--

157

00:09:55,710 --> 00:09:59,200

158

00:09:59,200 --> 00:10:06,660

and with a baton, shaking  
it and checking everybody

159

00:10:06,660 --> 00:10:11,350

on the floor, some with  
the blankets covered.

160

00:10:11,350 --> 00:10:14,860

He flipped the blanket.

161

00:10:14,860 --> 00:10:20,800

Until he came to me, and he  
poked me, and he said, up.

162

00:10:20,800 --> 00:10:24,760

And he said, arriba, in Spanish.

163

00:10:24,760 --> 00:10:26,320

Mm-hmm.

164

00:10:26,320 --> 00:10:29,680

Were you still wearing  
your US military uniform?

165

00:10:29,680 --> 00:10:30,420

Yeah.

166

00:10:30,420 --> 00:10:31,790

They don't change your clothes.

167

00:10:31,790 --> 00:10:32,830

OK.

168

00:10:32,830 --> 00:10:35,970

So he knew who you were, and you  
had your name on your uniform?

169

00:10:35,970 --> 00:10:39,530

Yeah, only political  
prisoners or the Jewish

170  
00:10:39,530 --> 00:10:44,080  
they had him change  
their status.

171  
00:10:44,080 --> 00:10:54,520  
But he told me to get up, and  
I walked behind the guards

172  
00:10:54,520 --> 00:10:59,020  
into a room with a  
table and two chairs.

173  
00:10:59,020 --> 00:11:04,450  
And an interrogation started.

174  
00:11:04,450 --> 00:11:06,610  
What were they asking you about?

175  
00:11:06,610 --> 00:11:21,135  
And he got kind of close to me,  
and he says, what's your name?

176  
00:11:21,135 --> 00:11:23,958  
I told him my name.

177  
00:11:23,958 --> 00:11:31,230  
And he says, where you born?

178  
00:11:31,230 --> 00:11:38,670  
I told him where I was  
born and where I lived.

179  
00:11:38,670 --> 00:11:40,500  
Yes.

180  
00:11:40,500 --> 00:11:45,980  
He says, what do you know  
what's happening up front?

181

00:11:45,980 --> 00:11:48,850

182  
00:11:48,850 --> 00:11:51,760  
Nothing-- defending ourselves.

183  
00:11:51,760 --> 00:11:54,530

184  
00:11:54,530 --> 00:12:03,980  
He said, what are you here for?

185  
00:12:03,980 --> 00:12:05,630  
I don't know nothing, sir.

186  
00:12:05,630 --> 00:12:11,750  
All I know is my serial  
number, my name, and that's it.

187  
00:12:11,750 --> 00:12:14,630

188  
00:12:14,630 --> 00:12:18,200  
If you want me to give me  
my social security number.

189  
00:12:18,200 --> 00:12:20,090  
He says, I know that.

190  
00:12:20,090 --> 00:12:22,680

191  
00:12:22,680 --> 00:12:25,020  
Social Security number?

192  
00:12:25,020 --> 00:12:28,440  
And he reiterated it.

193  
00:12:28,440 --> 00:12:30,240  
He told you what  
your number was?



194

00:12:30,240 --> 00:12:32,760

What my number was.

195

00:12:32,760 --> 00:12:41,805

And then he started to tell  
me about my family, where

196

00:12:41,805 --> 00:12:45,015

I was raised.

197

00:12:45,015 --> 00:12:48,090

He says, you were born in  
San Bernardino, California,

198

00:12:48,090 --> 00:12:50,040

but you went to Pasadena.

199

00:12:50,040 --> 00:12:54,015

You graduated  
Pasadena City College.

200

00:12:54,015 --> 00:12:57,030

201

00:12:57,030 --> 00:13:01,440

And you were in Durango.

202

00:13:01,440 --> 00:13:04,080

Your family lives in Durango.

203

00:13:04,080 --> 00:13:05,010

How did he know this?

204

00:13:05,010 --> 00:13:08,280

205

00:13:08,280 --> 00:13:10,344

He slapped my face  
when I asked him.

206

00:13:10,344 --> 00:13:17,000

207  
00:13:17,000 --> 00:13:19,970  
He asked me so many  
questions, the fact

208  
00:13:19,970 --> 00:13:21,891  
that he even told me that--

209  
00:13:21,891 --> 00:13:29,100

210  
00:13:29,100 --> 00:13:35,920  
your scoutmaster is the  
Schrader family, huh?

211  
00:13:35,920 --> 00:13:38,730

212  
00:13:38,730 --> 00:13:44,610  
And sure enough, Schrader  
I tried to ignore the name.

213  
00:13:44,610 --> 00:13:48,960  
But he happened to be  
the owner of the hardware

214  
00:13:48,960 --> 00:13:49,810  
store in Durango.

215  
00:13:49,810 --> 00:13:52,830

216  
00:13:52,830 --> 00:13:57,390  
And I kept denying.

217  
00:13:57,390 --> 00:14:03,130  
And everything I denied,  
he slapped my face.

218  
00:14:03,130 --> 00:14:06,180  
Then he started to put

needles in my fingernails.

219

00:14:06,180 --> 00:14:09,440

220

00:14:09,440 --> 00:14:12,146

He wanted to ask more questions.

221

00:14:12,146 --> 00:14:16,825

He says is your  
father so and so?

222

00:14:16,825 --> 00:14:21,670

223

00:14:21,670 --> 00:14:23,260

Your parents are so and so?

224

00:14:23,260 --> 00:14:25,770

225

00:14:25,770 --> 00:14:31,550

He says, and by  
the way, if you--

226

00:14:31,550 --> 00:14:38,370

227

00:14:38,370 --> 00:14:41,610

he kept trying to tell me--

228

00:14:41,610 --> 00:14:43,950

he put me in a suspense.

229

00:14:43,950 --> 00:14:47,910

230

00:14:47,910 --> 00:14:58,520

And he says, this is the Battle  
of the Graf Spee in Montevideo.

231

00:14:58,520 --> 00:15:04,220  
A German battleship with  
a British battleship

232  
00:15:04,220 --> 00:15:07,130  
fought in Montevideo.

233  
00:15:07,130 --> 00:15:14,110  
The cousins of the Schrader  
family went to your father,

234  
00:15:14,110 --> 00:15:15,460  
came up to visit.

235  
00:15:15,460 --> 00:15:17,880  
They happened to be a  
cousin and a Schrader.

236  
00:15:17,880 --> 00:15:21,280  
Mind you, he sold a  
rifle to your father.

237  
00:15:21,280 --> 00:15:26,992

238  
00:15:26,992 --> 00:15:30,830  
I says, I don't know.

239  
00:15:30,830 --> 00:15:33,670  
Well, I didn't know because  
I hadn't been to Durango,

240  
00:15:33,670 --> 00:15:36,395  
and I hadn't seen my father,  
and I hadn't seen my parents.

241  
00:15:36,395 --> 00:15:41,300

242  
00:15:41,300 --> 00:15:45,815  
But sure enough--  
just jumping ahead--

243

00:15:45,815 --> 00:15:48,800

244

00:15:48,800 --> 00:15:55,040

I asked my father, I says  
did a cousin of Schrader

245

00:15:55,040 --> 00:16:03,085

ever sold you a rifle,  
automatic rifle?

246

00:16:03,085 --> 00:16:03,585

Yes.

247

00:16:03,585 --> 00:16:06,430

248

00:16:06,430 --> 00:16:10,410

And he says, can  
you show it to me?

249

00:16:10,410 --> 00:16:13,200

And the way the  
German described it,

250

00:16:13,200 --> 00:16:24,240

it was folded and tucked  
into a special leather case.

251

00:16:24,240 --> 00:16:27,980

And he showed me the rifle.

252

00:16:27,980 --> 00:16:30,350

How do you think,  
or why do you think,

253

00:16:30,350 --> 00:16:32,300

they knew so much about you?

254

00:16:32,300 --> 00:16:32,960

Why you?

255

00:16:32,960 --> 00:16:35,650

256

00:16:35,650 --> 00:16:38,980

The Schraders probably  
were in contact

257

00:16:38,980 --> 00:16:44,110

with the Gestapo, the SS.

258

00:16:44,110 --> 00:16:49,210

And how come that  
one captain offered

259

00:16:49,210 --> 00:16:55,210

me to go to school if  
I gave him information?

260

00:16:55,210 --> 00:16:58,180

What information would I have?

261

00:16:58,180 --> 00:17:04,180

I'm a medic, like  
I told the German.

262

00:17:04,180 --> 00:17:06,430

I said, I'm a medic.

263

00:17:06,430 --> 00:17:11,050

All I know is take care of  
the sick and the wounded.

264

00:17:11,050 --> 00:17:14,150

I don't know nothing.

265

00:17:14,150 --> 00:17:21,579

And I gave him the  
expression, the terminology,

266

00:17:21,579 --> 00:17:27,700

to him in military words.

267

00:17:27,700 --> 00:17:30,700

I don't want to express it  
because it don't sound good.

268

00:17:30,700 --> 00:17:31,360

It's OK.

269

00:17:31,360 --> 00:17:31,930

Can I say it?

270

00:17:31,930 --> 00:17:32,440

Sure.

271

00:17:32,440 --> 00:17:35,800

I said, I don't know  
shit from shinola.

272

00:17:35,800 --> 00:17:38,020

That's the expression.

273

00:17:38,020 --> 00:17:41,320

And he slapped my face.

274

00:17:41,320 --> 00:17:44,290

Did you ever know the name  
of the Gestapo officer?

275

00:17:44,290 --> 00:17:46,250

He never gave me the name.

276

00:17:46,250 --> 00:17:50,620

And they never wanted  
to be given the name.

277

00:17:50,620 --> 00:17:52,150

Did he ever ask  
you other questions

278

00:17:52,150 --> 00:17:56,230

about what happened in Durango?

279

00:17:56,230 --> 00:17:56,800  
No.

280  
00:17:56,800 --> 00:17:58,580  
No.

281  
00:17:58,580 --> 00:18:07,870  
But what he told me that  
the two fellows were put up

282  
00:18:07,870 --> 00:18:09,760  
before the wall and shot.

283  
00:18:09,760 --> 00:18:11,952  
The German spies from the pool.

284  
00:18:11,952 --> 00:18:12,910  
The German spies, yeah.

285  
00:18:12,910 --> 00:18:14,470  
Wow.

286  
00:18:14,470 --> 00:18:16,450  
Was that the only time  
they interrogated you,

287  
00:18:16,450 --> 00:18:17,930  
or were there other  
times, as well?

288  
00:18:17,930 --> 00:18:20,710  
That was the only time  
they interrogated me.

289  
00:18:20,710 --> 00:18:23,200  
And you were then returned?

290  
00:18:23,200 --> 00:18:28,310

291  
00:18:28,310 --> 00:18:33,530  
Then he finished me, with



my hands all bleeding.

292

00:18:33,530 --> 00:18:38,570

After he finished with me, I  
headed back to the barracks.

293

00:18:38,570 --> 00:18:44,540

And all my buddies there were  
surprised to see my hands.

294

00:18:44,540 --> 00:18:46,700

And they were yelling  
at me, what did I say

295

00:18:46,700 --> 00:18:49,880

and what did I have to say?

296

00:18:49,880 --> 00:18:51,507

And I yelled back at them.

297

00:18:51,507 --> 00:18:53,090

And says, I don't  
have nothing to say.

298

00:18:53,090 --> 00:18:54,215

What do you want me to say?

299

00:18:54,215 --> 00:18:56,636

300

00:18:56,636 --> 00:18:59,150

But you start giving  
words that you don't

301

00:18:59,150 --> 00:19:03,020

want to say, express yourself.

302

00:19:03,020 --> 00:19:06,360

Because you're in  
pain at the same time.

303

00:19:06,360 --> 00:19:08,930

But anyway, days went on.

304

00:19:08,930 --> 00:19:14,480

What was daily life  
like in Stalag IX-B?

305

00:19:14,480 --> 00:19:15,740

Were you able to write home?

306

00:19:15,740 --> 00:19:17,360

Did your parents  
know where you are?

307

00:19:17,360 --> 00:19:19,040

No, you couldn't write home.

308

00:19:19,040 --> 00:19:23,720

309

00:19:23,720 --> 00:19:34,720

I remember that my wife that's  
ill, we were just friends.

310

00:19:34,720 --> 00:19:37,570

And she would send me things--

311

00:19:37,570 --> 00:19:38,810

food or something.

312

00:19:38,810 --> 00:19:40,732

But they never got through.

313

00:19:40,732 --> 00:19:43,090

Their letters, they  
never got through.

314

00:19:43,090 --> 00:19:47,200

Was your family notified that  
you were captured as a POW?

315

00:19:47,200 --> 00:19:54,480

My family got through--

316  
00:19:54,480 --> 00:19:57,110  
well, not exactly.

317  
00:19:57,110 --> 00:20:00,220  
My mother.

318  
00:20:00,220 --> 00:20:07,000  
My mother was visiting, came  
from Durango to Pasadena,

319  
00:20:07,000 --> 00:20:14,920  
bringing my brother to the  
children's hospital in LA

320  
00:20:14,920 --> 00:20:18,670  
because he had  
infantile paralysis.

321  
00:20:18,670 --> 00:20:24,700  
And so my mother was staying  
with my aunt, her sister,

322  
00:20:24,700 --> 00:20:27,010  
in Pasadena.

323  
00:20:27,010 --> 00:20:34,540  
And my aunt was working  
then at a defense

324  
00:20:34,540 --> 00:20:39,790  
factory where they built  
certain rifles for the army.

325  
00:20:39,790 --> 00:20:41,840  
And she stayed home--

326  
00:20:41,840 --> 00:20:43,690  
my mother was at home.

327  
00:20:43,690 --> 00:20:48,010  
And she received a

knock at the door.

328  
00:20:48,010 --> 00:20:50,320  
And the Western Union--

329  
00:20:50,320 --> 00:20:52,930

330  
00:20:52,930 --> 00:20:55,900  
she wasn't supposed to  
receive that telegram.

331  
00:20:55,900 --> 00:20:57,400  
It was supposed to  
go to your aunt.

332  
00:20:57,400 --> 00:20:59,650  
To my aunt.

333  
00:20:59,650 --> 00:21:08,970  
And my mother, well,  
received it, signed.

334  
00:21:08,970 --> 00:21:14,630  
And she read it,  
and she got sick.

335  
00:21:14,630 --> 00:21:16,580  
What did the telegram say?

336  
00:21:16,580 --> 00:21:20,600  
That I was missing in action.

337  
00:21:20,600 --> 00:21:23,720  
And she wasn't supposed  
to receive that.

338  
00:21:23,720 --> 00:21:25,160  
From there on, she turned.

339  
00:21:25,160 --> 00:21:30,140  
She got sick-- her gall bladder.

340  
00:21:30,140 --> 00:21:31,850  
Why did the telegram  
go to your aunt

341  
00:21:31,850 --> 00:21:33,380  
and not to your  
parents in Mexico?

342  
00:21:33,380 --> 00:21:35,690  
Well, slowly, my  
aunt would have told

343  
00:21:35,690 --> 00:21:42,680  
her, in a very different way,  
to prevent her from a shock.

344  
00:21:42,680 --> 00:21:50,210

345  
00:21:50,210 --> 00:21:54,140  
But then, coming back to--

346  
00:21:54,140 --> 00:21:55,160  
Back to the camp.

347  
00:21:55,160 --> 00:21:57,400

348  
00:21:57,400 --> 00:21:59,150  
You weren't able to  
get letters from home.

349  
00:21:59,150 --> 00:22:01,730  
Did you receive any  
Red Cross packages?

350  
00:22:01,730 --> 00:22:05,150  
No, no.

351  
00:22:05,150 --> 00:22:10,110  
In the course of time,

after this whole thing

352

00:22:10,110 --> 00:22:17,090

turned out there at  
this interrogation,

353

00:22:17,090 --> 00:22:19,970

I had a wristwatch.

354

00:22:19,970 --> 00:22:24,997

And it was a  
political prisoner--

355

00:22:24,997 --> 00:22:28,270

356

00:22:28,270 --> 00:22:35,730

Jewish-- and he says,  
I'll give you four loaves

357

00:22:35,730 --> 00:22:39,330

of bread for that watch.

358

00:22:39,330 --> 00:22:41,310

This was in Bad Orb?

359

00:22:41,310 --> 00:22:43,330

In Bad Orb.

360

00:22:43,330 --> 00:22:45,840

So I told him, I says, OK.

361

00:22:45,840 --> 00:22:49,500

So it was a watch.

362

00:22:49,500 --> 00:22:51,390

The name brand was Haste--

363

00:22:51,390 --> 00:23:02,590

H-A-S-T-E. And I got  
the loaves of bread.

364

00:23:02,590 --> 00:23:07,540

So then I divided the loaves  
of bread with the fellas,

365

00:23:07,540 --> 00:23:11,050

and I left one for me.

366

00:23:11,050 --> 00:23:14,980

And I used it as a pillow.

367

00:23:14,980 --> 00:23:21,370

And before you know it,  
by morning, it was gone.

368

00:23:21,370 --> 00:23:26,710

They nitpicked, nitpicked it.

369

00:23:26,710 --> 00:23:31,060

And every crumb was eaten.

370

00:23:31,060 --> 00:23:32,860

[CHUCKLES]

371

00:23:32,860 --> 00:23:34,330

I'll never forget that.

372

00:23:34,330 --> 00:23:37,960

373

00:23:37,960 --> 00:23:41,720

Anyway, it came the day--

374

00:23:41,720 --> 00:23:43,290

How long were you in Bad Orb?

375

00:23:43,290 --> 00:23:46,030

376

00:23:46,030 --> 00:23:48,310

Until the 8th of February.

377

00:23:48,310 --> 00:23:48,840

OK.

378

00:23:48,840 --> 00:23:51,340

And what happened on  
the 8th of February?

379

00:23:51,340 --> 00:23:55,270

Just before the 8th of  
February, just a couple of days,

380

00:23:55,270 --> 00:23:59,830

the Germans selected for us to--

381

00:23:59,830 --> 00:24:13,120

well, a week before, two  
fellas of our outfit--

382

00:24:13,120 --> 00:24:17,620

not my division but  
from another division--

383

00:24:17,620 --> 00:24:20,740

hacked the kitchen cooks.

384

00:24:20,740 --> 00:24:24,940

And they had to  
steal big salami.

385

00:24:24,940 --> 00:24:31,870

And so we were forced to stand  
outside until they gave up

386

00:24:31,870 --> 00:24:34,360

or, otherwise,  
they'd shoot us all.

387

00:24:34,360 --> 00:24:36,290

So they had the  
machine guns at us.

388

00:24:36,290 --> 00:24:40,300



And if we didn't come  
up with the two fellas,

389  
00:24:40,300 --> 00:24:42,970  
they would shoot us all.

390  
00:24:42,970 --> 00:24:48,620  
Yet when we were forced  
to leave the barracks,

391  
00:24:48,620 --> 00:24:51,730  
fellas could not--

392  
00:24:51,730 --> 00:24:56,110  
they did not, or were not  
able to, put their shoes on

393  
00:24:56,110 --> 00:24:59,470  
or socks on to stand  
out there in the snow

394  
00:24:59,470 --> 00:25:00,653  
barefooted or whatever.

395  
00:25:00,653 --> 00:25:02,320  
They just wanted  
everyone to go quickly.

396  
00:25:02,320 --> 00:25:05,080  
And all day, all day.

397  
00:25:05,080 --> 00:25:07,150  
And there was fox--

398  
00:25:07,150 --> 00:25:12,940  
latrines were standing so  
they could fall into the hole.

399  
00:25:12,940 --> 00:25:15,670

400  
00:25:15,670 --> 00:25:19,660

So we were there from 6  
o'clock in the morning

401  
00:25:19,660 --> 00:25:21,730  
to around 4 o'clock.

402  
00:25:21,730 --> 00:25:24,730  
Finally, the two guys gave up.

403  
00:25:24,730 --> 00:25:28,000  
And that was from the  
help of the chaplains,

404  
00:25:28,000 --> 00:25:30,490  
a couple of chaplains  
that were captured.

405  
00:25:30,490 --> 00:25:34,060  
What did the chaplains do?

406  
00:25:34,060 --> 00:25:43,360  
They turned the fellas to  
the police, German Gestapo.

407  
00:25:43,360 --> 00:25:46,630  
Did they give them up, or did  
they negotiate an agreement?

408  
00:25:46,630 --> 00:25:51,970  
No, they gave up themselves  
because, otherwise, they

409  
00:25:51,970 --> 00:25:55,430  
would see that they would  
have killed everybody.

410  
00:25:55,430 --> 00:25:57,700  
And what happened to those two?

411  
00:25:57,700 --> 00:26:01,060  
They were put in a dungeon.

412

00:26:01,060 --> 00:26:04,060  
We never knew what happened  
to them afterwards.

413  
00:26:04,060 --> 00:26:07,450  
But they were punished and  
put into a dungeon where

414  
00:26:07,450 --> 00:26:10,310  
they couldn't see the light.

415  
00:26:10,310 --> 00:26:17,050  
And so, anyway, about a week  
later, on the 8th of February,

416  
00:26:17,050 --> 00:26:21,490  
we were forced to come out  
of the barracks and line up.

417  
00:26:21,490 --> 00:26:36,960  
And then, the commander said  
all American Jews with names

418  
00:26:36,960 --> 00:26:43,830  
Jewish, take two steps forward.

419  
00:26:43,830 --> 00:26:47,200

420  
00:26:47,200 --> 00:26:54,370  
And a lot of our fellows,  
started to yank their--

421  
00:26:54,370 --> 00:27:00,370  
some had a little star  
medal, and their dog tags

422  
00:27:00,370 --> 00:27:05,740  
carried the H for Hebrew, and  
started to convert that up

423  
00:27:05,740 --> 00:27:08,890  
to a B by scratching it.

424  
00:27:08,890 --> 00:27:15,340  
And some, in desperation,  
threw it on the ground

425  
00:27:15,340 --> 00:27:21,280  
and buried it in the snow  
and whatever happened

426  
00:27:21,280 --> 00:27:25,660  
to eliminate that situation.

427  
00:27:25,660 --> 00:27:29,560  
In other words, the Germans  
hated the Jewish totally.

428  
00:27:29,560 --> 00:27:32,170

429  
00:27:32,170 --> 00:27:47,788  
And my buddy, I remember,  
Norm Fellman, he says,

430  
00:27:47,788 --> 00:27:50,320  
I held onto it.

431  
00:27:50,320 --> 00:27:52,486  
I didn't give a shit.

432  
00:27:52,486 --> 00:27:53,980  
Pardon the expression.

433  
00:27:53,980 --> 00:27:57,010  
That's OK.

434  
00:27:57,010 --> 00:28:00,160  
And allowed them to--

435  
00:28:00,160 --> 00:28:02,770

436

00:28:02,770 --> 00:28:03,920  
they held onto their faith.

437  
00:28:03,920 --> 00:28:06,660

438  
00:28:06,660 --> 00:28:13,840  
And so they were only  
able to get about 85,

439  
00:28:13,840 --> 00:28:16,630  
close to 90, fellas.

440  
00:28:16,630 --> 00:28:20,170  
And then the Germans  
came, selecting.

441  
00:28:20,170 --> 00:28:22,090  
Did the Jewish  
soldiers step forward?

442  
00:28:22,090 --> 00:28:24,610  
Did they identify themselves?

443  
00:28:24,610 --> 00:28:25,170  
Oh, yes.

444  
00:28:25,170 --> 00:28:27,830

445  
00:28:27,830 --> 00:28:30,350  
By name or the way they looked.

446  
00:28:30,350 --> 00:28:36,660  
The Germans pointed their  
finger or their knives at them

447  
00:28:36,660 --> 00:28:39,530  
and said--

448  
00:28:39,530 --> 00:28:42,104  
like it or not.

449  
00:28:42,104 --> 00:28:42,918  
Gestapo was mean.

450  
00:28:42,918 --> 00:28:43,710  
Then what happened.

451  
00:28:43,710 --> 00:28:47,270

452  
00:28:47,270 --> 00:28:55,900  
And then, the commander came by.

453  
00:28:55,900 --> 00:28:59,350  
And then he poked at  
me, pulled by the--

454  
00:28:59,350 --> 00:29:05,195  
put me out front as an  
undesirable because I spied.

455  
00:29:05,195 --> 00:29:08,780

456  
00:29:08,780 --> 00:29:10,730  
What do you mean you spied?

457  
00:29:10,730 --> 00:29:11,540  
I'm sorry.

458  
00:29:11,540 --> 00:29:17,600  
I spied on two  
employees of my father,

459  
00:29:17,600 --> 00:29:25,335  
against the Gestapo, the Germans  
that were spying, connecting--

460  
00:29:25,335 --> 00:29:26,210  
The ones at the pool.

461

00:29:26,210 --> 00:29:27,050  
The pool, uh-huh.

462  
00:29:27,050 --> 00:29:30,890

463  
00:29:30,890 --> 00:29:37,220  
And then the other  
undesirables--

464  
00:29:37,220 --> 00:29:42,530  
bad records, whoever had bad  
records-- they selected them.

465  
00:29:42,530 --> 00:29:46,490  
They knew very well what  
kind of background they had.

466  
00:29:46,490 --> 00:29:49,260

467  
00:29:49,260 --> 00:29:52,710  
How many Americans  
were selected?

468  
00:29:52,710 --> 00:29:55,770  
350.

469  
00:29:55,770 --> 00:29:56,610  
350.

470  
00:29:56,610 --> 00:29:59,280  
And what did they tell  
you after the selection?

471  
00:29:59,280 --> 00:29:59,850  
Nothing.

472  
00:29:59,850 --> 00:30:03,030  
They wouldn't even talk to  
you about nothing, absolutely

473

00:30:03,030 --> 00:30:04,530  
nothing.

474  
00:30:04,530 --> 00:30:07,650  
For a while, they  
didn't say nothing,

475  
00:30:07,650 --> 00:30:14,160  
until you were to be  
completely segregated

476  
00:30:14,160 --> 00:30:17,640  
from the whole groups.

477  
00:30:17,640 --> 00:30:20,760  
You are nothing but  
a little selection

478  
00:30:20,760 --> 00:30:26,640  
here, on one side  
to leave the place.

479  
00:30:26,640 --> 00:30:30,120

480  
00:30:30,120 --> 00:30:36,840  
And the term was that we  
were to travel to a place

481  
00:30:36,840 --> 00:30:42,375  
that we were supposed  
to have all the unique--

482  
00:30:42,375 --> 00:30:48,040

483  
00:30:48,040 --> 00:30:53,920  
place to play ball, would  
have motion pictures,

484  
00:30:53,920 --> 00:31:03,970  
and, oh, beautify our thoughts  
by giving us good thinking.



485  
00:31:03,970 --> 00:31:08,410  
So they tell you you were being  
transferred to a different POW

486  
00:31:08,410 --> 00:31:08,920  
camp?

487  
00:31:08,920 --> 00:31:10,870  
No, nothing like that.

488  
00:31:10,870 --> 00:31:20,650  
All just to tell us that we were  
being taken to a place selected

489  
00:31:20,650 --> 00:31:22,630  
with better care.

490  
00:31:22,630 --> 00:31:25,580

491  
00:31:25,580 --> 00:31:29,270  
And it was hell.

492  
00:31:29,270 --> 00:31:33,980  
So did they take you out  
of Stalag IX-B that day?

493  
00:31:33,980 --> 00:31:35,000  
The following day.

494  
00:31:35,000 --> 00:31:38,680  
So what did they do  
to you the next day?

495  
00:31:38,680 --> 00:31:40,640  
They put us on a train.

496  
00:31:40,640 --> 00:31:41,810  
What kind?

497

00:31:41,810 --> 00:31:50,670  
A boxcar where you couldn't  
kneel, you couldn't squat,

498  
00:31:50,670 --> 00:31:56,250  
for six days in those boxcars.

499  
00:31:56,250 --> 00:32:01,470  
And fellas couldn't  
defecate at all.

500  
00:32:01,470 --> 00:32:04,650  
They had to do it right there.

501  
00:32:04,650 --> 00:32:09,530  
And for six days--

502  
00:32:09,530 --> 00:32:12,710

503  
00:32:12,710 --> 00:32:14,480  
and you couldn't eat nothing.

504  
00:32:14,480 --> 00:32:16,505  
You have nothing to  
eat, nothing to drink.

505  
00:32:16,505 --> 00:32:19,060

506  
00:32:19,060 --> 00:32:22,360  
The snow that hit  
from the cracks,

507  
00:32:22,360 --> 00:32:28,900  
you try to lick it or poke your  
hand through the slot window

508  
00:32:28,900 --> 00:32:37,630  
to get the drops of  
water from the rain

509

00:32:37,630 --> 00:32:46,710  
until we came to Berga in  
the Elster, which is part

510  
00:32:46,710 --> 00:32:49,710  
of the compounds of Buchenwald.

511  
00:32:49,710 --> 00:32:52,880

512  
00:32:52,880 --> 00:32:56,600  
What did you see when  
you arrived at Berga?

513  
00:32:56,600 --> 00:32:59,900  
It was so snowy  
that you couldn't

514  
00:32:59,900 --> 00:33:02,090  
catch the glimpse very well.

515  
00:33:02,090 --> 00:33:05,540  
But you see, like,  
towers of houses.

516  
00:33:05,540 --> 00:33:10,160

517  
00:33:10,160 --> 00:33:15,650  
But we were forced to march,  
when we got out of the train,

518  
00:33:15,650 --> 00:33:19,620  
and to head to the area.

519  
00:33:19,620 --> 00:33:22,630  
It turned out to be barracks.

520  
00:33:22,630 --> 00:33:26,270  
They were ugly,  
ugly, falling apart.

521

00:33:26,270 --> 00:33:28,990

So in other words,  
the barracks were--

522

00:33:28,990 --> 00:33:32,060

the cracks, when  
you were inside,

523

00:33:32,060 --> 00:33:38,480

you could feel the wind  
coming in through the cracks.

524

00:33:38,480 --> 00:33:40,070

And how many men per barrack?

525

00:33:40,070 --> 00:33:42,230

Were you all together in one?

526

00:33:42,230 --> 00:33:43,250

One barracks?

527

00:33:43,250 --> 00:33:54,020

We were divided into groups  
to fit 60 to 80 in a barracks

528

00:33:54,020 --> 00:33:59,710

with three bunks, three--

529

00:33:59,710 --> 00:34:02,710

530

00:34:02,710 --> 00:34:05,530

How many people per bunk?

531

00:34:05,530 --> 00:34:07,900

Three to a bunk.

532

00:34:07,900 --> 00:34:09,310

Like three per level.

533

00:34:09,310 --> 00:34:11,110

Per level-- three levels.

534  
00:34:11,110 --> 00:34:11,830  
OK.

535  
00:34:11,830 --> 00:34:16,070  
Were there other prisoners  
there when you arrived?

536  
00:34:16,070 --> 00:34:18,520  
They had them separated from us.

537  
00:34:18,520 --> 00:34:23,230  
They were the Jewish prisoners.

538  
00:34:23,230 --> 00:34:25,330  
They had them separated from us.

539  
00:34:25,330 --> 00:34:29,601  
What was your first impression  
when you saw those prisoners?

540  
00:34:29,601 --> 00:34:32,840

541  
00:34:32,840 --> 00:34:34,489  
Did you know who they were?

542  
00:34:34,489 --> 00:34:36,889  
We didn't know.

543  
00:34:36,889 --> 00:34:39,199  
We didn't know until afterwards.

544  
00:34:39,199 --> 00:34:45,469  
We found out that they were  
being worked in the tunnels.

545  
00:34:45,469 --> 00:34:54,350  
So when they selected our groups  
into 16 per group per tunnel,

546

00:34:54,350 --> 00:35:00,650  
there were 11 to 12 tunnels.

547  
00:35:00,650 --> 00:35:08,240  
And each tunnel, they had fellas  
go in and dig into the tunnels

548  
00:35:08,240 --> 00:35:13,160  
to enlarge the areas  
inside of the tunnels to--

549  
00:35:13,160 --> 00:35:17,630  
well, we didn't know why the  
tunnels were being built.

550  
00:35:17,630 --> 00:35:19,130  
Did you have to  
work in the tunnels,

551  
00:35:19,130 --> 00:35:20,960  
or were you given  
a different job?

552  
00:35:20,960 --> 00:35:26,810  
Us medics were to only  
take care of the sick.

553  
00:35:26,810 --> 00:35:33,410  
And then, what I did was  
I asked the commander, why

554  
00:35:33,410 --> 00:35:42,090  
not, if a fella's going  
to work in a tunnel today,

555  
00:35:42,090 --> 00:35:47,880  
give him a day off  
tomorrow and have

556  
00:35:47,880 --> 00:35:51,390  
another group work for him?

557  
00:35:51,390 --> 00:35:54,677

Kind of liberate him from that.

558

00:35:54,677 --> 00:35:56,010

So what was their work schedule.

559

00:35:56,010 --> 00:35:57,570

They slapped my face.

560

00:35:57,570 --> 00:35:58,320

They slapped me.

561

00:35:58,320 --> 00:35:58,860

They hit me.

562

00:35:58,860 --> 00:36:03,678

Because I was supposed  
to say nothing and it

563

00:36:03,678 --> 00:36:04,470

wasn't my business.

564

00:36:04,470 --> 00:36:06,012

But I told them, I  
said, I'm a medic.

565

00:36:06,012 --> 00:36:08,610

566

00:36:08,610 --> 00:36:11,510

I said, don't we have a doctor?

567

00:36:11,510 --> 00:36:14,470

They told us they had a  
doctor, but it wasn't true.

568

00:36:14,470 --> 00:36:17,070

So we didn't have a doctor.

569

00:36:17,070 --> 00:36:20,820

So what we were doing is  
trying to take care of fellas.

570

00:36:20,820 --> 00:36:25,410

Norm Fellman, as  
well as others like

571

00:36:25,410 --> 00:36:31,770

that, worked in the tunnels,  
and they breathed the silt

572

00:36:31,770 --> 00:36:36,000

that came out of the rock.

573

00:36:36,000 --> 00:36:39,000

And that damaged the lungs.

574

00:36:39,000 --> 00:36:42,810

575

00:36:42,810 --> 00:36:47,100

Some of the fellas,  
like Norm, would tell me

576

00:36:47,100 --> 00:36:54,650

what they did was try  
to weaken the dynamite

577

00:36:54,650 --> 00:37:01,040

so that it wouldn't be  
too powerful to bust.

578

00:37:01,040 --> 00:37:04,880

But I laugh when he would  
tell me about the things--

579

00:37:04,880 --> 00:37:05,780

totally laugh.

580

00:37:05,780 --> 00:37:06,440

Like what?

581

00:37:06,440 --> 00:37:07,190

What other things?



582

00:37:07,190 --> 00:37:08,720

They tried to do sabotage.

583

00:37:08,720 --> 00:37:10,550

Sabotage to make them--

584

00:37:10,550 --> 00:37:18,320

and then they would  
sabotage the cars

585

00:37:18,320 --> 00:37:25,200

that carry the rock to dump it  
off to the side of the river.

586

00:37:25,200 --> 00:37:32,165

And this damaging the springs  
of the cart, when you pulled,

587

00:37:32,165 --> 00:37:36,590

it would fall apart,  
without the Germans

588

00:37:36,590 --> 00:37:39,150

knowing that it was  
being done that way.

589

00:37:39,150 --> 00:37:40,610

And what were you  
doing while they

590

00:37:40,610 --> 00:37:42,023

were working in the tunnels?

591

00:37:42,023 --> 00:37:43,190

Did you work in the tunnels?

592

00:37:43,190 --> 00:37:43,640

No.

593

00:37:43,640 --> 00:37:44,390

What was your job?

594

00:37:44,390 --> 00:37:51,470

No, I'd go into tunnels  
very on and off,

595

00:37:51,470 --> 00:37:55,820

when they let me, to  
see what they were doing

596

00:37:55,820 --> 00:37:58,970

and that they were OK.

597

00:37:58,970 --> 00:38:03,170

And I'd tell them, say, he's  
not well, or please let him out.

598

00:38:03,170 --> 00:38:05,390

Let him rest.

599

00:38:05,390 --> 00:38:06,860

He's weak.

600

00:38:06,860 --> 00:38:11,320

And you're not feeding  
him, and he's not eating.

601

00:38:11,320 --> 00:38:17,805

He has diarrhea-- the dysentery,  
diarrhea, everything, he had,

602

00:38:17,805 --> 00:38:18,880

the fellas.

603

00:38:18,880 --> 00:38:20,825

So you were still  
being their medic?

604

00:38:20,825 --> 00:38:21,800

Beg pardon?

605

00:38:21,800 --> 00:38:23,645

You were still  
being their medic.

606  
00:38:23,645 --> 00:38:25,010  
Their medic, yes.

607  
00:38:25,010 --> 00:38:30,020  
And so did you have  
another job, specifically,

608  
00:38:30,020 --> 00:38:31,540  
at the camp, a role?

609  
00:38:31,540 --> 00:38:33,470  
No, nothing, nothing.

610  
00:38:33,470 --> 00:38:40,100  
Nothing but just keeping  
up with the sick,

611  
00:38:40,100 --> 00:38:43,280  
saying that it  
was taken care of.

612  
00:38:43,280 --> 00:38:45,530  
Sometimes, some of  
the fellas started

613  
00:38:45,530 --> 00:38:47,160  
to feel that they  
wanted to escape.

614  
00:38:47,160 --> 00:38:52,380

615  
00:38:52,380 --> 00:38:55,290  
And when they tried  
to escape, they

616  
00:38:55,290 --> 00:39:05,470  
wanted to do something without  
the Germans knowing about it.

617  
00:39:05,470 --> 00:39:10,750

But it didn't phase out too  
well because the Germans were

618  
00:39:10,750 --> 00:39:15,520  
too smart in that respect.

619  
00:39:15,520 --> 00:39:17,140  
Did anyone manage to escape?

620  
00:39:17,140 --> 00:39:20,630

621  
00:39:20,630 --> 00:39:23,260  
There was two, three  
of them did escape--

622  
00:39:23,260 --> 00:39:26,900

623  
00:39:26,900 --> 00:39:27,400  
Cohen.

624  
00:39:27,400 --> 00:39:31,910

625  
00:39:31,910 --> 00:39:40,668  
Cohen did escape, but  
then, he was killed.

626  
00:39:40,668 --> 00:39:47,860  
But there's another--

627  
00:39:47,860 --> 00:39:50,540  
Littell escaped.

628  
00:39:50,540 --> 00:39:51,730  
And he managed to escape.

629  
00:39:51,730 --> 00:39:55,340

630

00:39:55,340 --> 00:40:04,640  
And Cohen, when the German  
asked me, or told me,

631  
00:40:04,640 --> 00:40:09,350  
to verify as a medic  
that he was shot

632  
00:40:09,350 --> 00:40:11,270  
because he tried to escape.

633  
00:40:11,270 --> 00:40:16,420  
In other words, you shoot  
a person from a distance,

634  
00:40:16,420 --> 00:40:17,920  
you're going to hit  
him in the back.

635  
00:40:17,920 --> 00:40:20,790

636  
00:40:20,790 --> 00:40:27,950  
So the German asked  
me, I want you

637  
00:40:27,950 --> 00:40:39,550  
to check and to see that he  
was shot trying to escape.

638  
00:40:39,550 --> 00:40:41,160  
I says, can I turn him over?

639  
00:40:41,160 --> 00:40:43,170  
Can I look at him?

640  
00:40:43,170 --> 00:40:50,680  
And that's saying, OK.

641  
00:40:50,680 --> 00:40:55,900  
And the Germans would  
shoot him in the forehead

642

00:40:55,900 --> 00:40:56,890  
with a wooden bullet.

643

00:40:56,890 --> 00:40:59,690

644

00:40:59,690 --> 00:41:02,280  
What did they do?

645

00:41:02,280 --> 00:41:11,325  
They stand him behind the wall,  
and they shoot him in the head.

646

00:41:11,325 --> 00:41:15,200  
And then they waxed the hole.

647

00:41:15,200 --> 00:41:17,450  
What does a bullet,  
a wooden bullet, do?

648

00:41:17,450 --> 00:41:24,530  
It's just that it shoots in  
and splinters inside the head.

649

00:41:24,530 --> 00:41:28,640  
OK, they were using  
that as an excuse.

650

00:41:28,640 --> 00:41:30,600  
They thought that  
I wouldn't identify

651

00:41:30,600 --> 00:41:32,810  
the wax that covered the hole.

652

00:41:32,810 --> 00:41:35,420

653

00:41:35,420 --> 00:41:41,300  
So the Germans were slaughtering  
our men that tried to escape.

654

00:41:41,300 --> 00:41:45,820

655

00:41:45,820 --> 00:41:50,290

And the conditions were,  
obviously, much worse in Berga?

656

00:41:50,290 --> 00:41:55,900

Well, they started to force  
us to take our clothes off

657

00:41:55,900 --> 00:42:00,280

and just sleep with  
their underwear.

658

00:42:00,280 --> 00:42:03,520

And they would force me  
to take all the clothes

659

00:42:03,520 --> 00:42:09,970

into a shack just a little  
bit outside of the barracks

660

00:42:09,970 --> 00:42:11,520

to prevent anyone from escaping.

661

00:42:11,520 --> 00:42:14,560

662

00:42:14,560 --> 00:42:15,580

So this got worse.

663

00:42:15,580 --> 00:42:19,240

Because sleeping  
without any clothes,

664

00:42:19,240 --> 00:42:24,190

it was dangerous  
for your health--

665

00:42:24,190 --> 00:42:31,570

getting worse, pneumonia,

and all the effects,

666

00:42:31,570 --> 00:42:35,120

the side effects, that you  
would get without being

667

00:42:35,120 --> 00:42:36,300

able to eat at all.

668

00:42:36,300 --> 00:42:38,360

Right.

669

00:42:38,360 --> 00:42:42,410

What kind of food were  
you provided with?

670

00:42:42,410 --> 00:42:45,890

Were the men able to get  
anything, any nourishment,

671

00:42:45,890 --> 00:42:48,650

or did they receive  
any packages?

672

00:42:48,650 --> 00:42:52,070

I mean, some camps, people  
were able to receive

673

00:42:52,070 --> 00:42:54,230

mail or Red Cross packages.

674

00:42:54,230 --> 00:43:00,420

In one occasion, we received a  
package, a Red Cross package.

675

00:43:00,420 --> 00:43:08,040

And it was divided into four to  
a package, or six to a package.

676

00:43:08,040 --> 00:43:11,910

The package was  
meant to be for one--



677

00:43:11,910 --> 00:43:12,870  
one per person.

678

00:43:12,870 --> 00:43:15,390

679

00:43:15,390 --> 00:43:20,340  
And that's how I got my diary,  
from one of those packages.

680

00:43:20,340 --> 00:43:22,170  
So you received  
the diary in Berga.

681

00:43:22,170 --> 00:43:26,130  
I received the book in  
Berga-- empty book--

682

00:43:26,130 --> 00:43:30,830  
yes, and not at Bad Orb.

683

00:43:30,830 --> 00:43:33,690

684

00:43:33,690 --> 00:43:35,910  
And I used that  
for that purpose.

685

00:43:35,910 --> 00:43:45,570  
But I mean, the Germans had  
stacks of Red Cross packages

686

00:43:45,570 --> 00:43:50,490  
stacked up in a warehouse.

687

00:43:50,490 --> 00:43:56,910  
So what was an average day  
at Berga for all of you?

688

00:43:56,910 --> 00:43:58,890  
Was there anything  
as an average day?

689  
00:43:58,890 --> 00:44:00,450  
Was there any typical day?

690  
00:44:00,450 --> 00:44:02,670  
No, no.

691  
00:44:02,670 --> 00:44:14,410  
And the stuff-- tea to  
drink was nothing but just

692  
00:44:14,410 --> 00:44:19,540  
grass boiled into tea.

693  
00:44:19,540 --> 00:44:25,240  
And the same thing would  
be if we got a soup,

694  
00:44:25,240 --> 00:44:28,810  
it was a few spuds into it.

695  
00:44:28,810 --> 00:44:42,110  
And to flavor it, we would  
receive a harsh water,

696  
00:44:42,110 --> 00:44:52,370  
no taste at all, and  
with cockroaches and rats

697  
00:44:52,370 --> 00:44:53,180  
mixed into it.

698  
00:44:53,180 --> 00:44:55,810

699  
00:44:55,810 --> 00:45:01,990  
And it would make you  
sick from your stomach.

700  
00:45:01,990 --> 00:45:05,390  
Was there any interaction  
with the other prisoners,

701  
00:45:05,390 --> 00:45:07,970  
the other political prisoners  
in the other part of the camp?

702  
00:45:07,970 --> 00:45:09,950  
We didn't know  
anything about them

703  
00:45:09,950 --> 00:45:13,780  
but just that they stayed  
a distance from us.

704  
00:45:13,780 --> 00:45:16,900  
Did they work together in  
the mines, in the tunnels?

705  
00:45:16,900 --> 00:45:19,480  
No, no, they didn't  
mix in with us.

706  
00:45:19,480 --> 00:45:22,540  
But from underground,  
we found out

707  
00:45:22,540 --> 00:45:30,700  
why the Germans had these  
men working in those tunnels.

708  
00:45:30,700 --> 00:45:35,470  
We found out later  
that those tunnels

709  
00:45:35,470 --> 00:45:39,310  
were being made because  
the Germans were

710  
00:45:39,310 --> 00:45:42,820  
developing secret equipment--

711  
00:45:42,820 --> 00:45:48,700  
missiles, buzz bombs,  
and other equipment

712  
00:45:48,700 --> 00:45:50,470  
that they had in mind--

713  
00:45:50,470 --> 00:45:53,980  
that they were hiding  
in these tunnels.

714  
00:45:53,980 --> 00:45:57,790  
And the physical  
conditions were atrocious.

715  
00:45:57,790 --> 00:46:00,580  
What were the Germans  
who ran the camp like?

716  
00:46:00,580 --> 00:46:04,000  
How did they treat you guys?

717  
00:46:04,000 --> 00:46:06,280  
They treated us very  
bad because of the fact

718  
00:46:06,280 --> 00:46:07,630  
that they beat them.

719  
00:46:07,630 --> 00:46:13,170  
They beat them with the butt  
of their rifle and poked them.

720  
00:46:13,170 --> 00:46:18,670  
They would force, say,  
to get a railroad tie

721  
00:46:18,670 --> 00:46:23,710  
and carry it into the tunnels  
to repair the railroad ties.

722  
00:46:23,710 --> 00:46:28,240  
And they could barely  
carry the weight

723

00:46:28,240 --> 00:46:30,580  
that they had with themselves  
because of the fact

724  
00:46:30,580 --> 00:46:32,943  
that the weakness  
that they felt.

725  
00:46:32,943 --> 00:46:34,360  
Not eating, you're  
not going to be

726  
00:46:34,360 --> 00:46:36,610  
able to lift anything  
that is so heavy.

727  
00:46:36,610 --> 00:46:39,520

728  
00:46:39,520 --> 00:46:43,850  
And did you receive  
any news of the war?

729  
00:46:43,850 --> 00:46:46,720  
Did you guys know what was  
going on outside of Berga?

730  
00:46:46,720 --> 00:46:52,360  
Well, underground,  
there was comments.

731  
00:46:52,360 --> 00:46:57,940  
The one guard, he  
was an Austrian.

732  
00:46:57,940 --> 00:47:03,260  
And every time he'd  
see the bombers fly by,

733  
00:47:03,260 --> 00:47:06,310  
he would make the  
sign of the cross--

734

00:47:06,310 --> 00:47:12,010  
and he looked on the side  
that the Germans don't look

735  
00:47:12,010 --> 00:47:14,470  
at him, what he was doing--

736  
00:47:14,470 --> 00:47:19,750  
but thanking that our bombers  
would be heading for--

737  
00:47:19,750 --> 00:47:27,910  
it would be about 500 B-17s per  
hour that would bomb the sites.

738  
00:47:27,910 --> 00:47:36,370  
And you could feel, when they  
bombed the areas, the windows,

739  
00:47:36,370 --> 00:47:40,630  
the glass would crack with  
the vibration of the bombing.

740  
00:47:40,630 --> 00:47:43,840  
But things like that.

741  
00:47:43,840 --> 00:47:48,670  
Another thing, what  
we find out, we

742  
00:47:48,670 --> 00:47:53,560  
got 100 grams of bread per week.

743  
00:47:53,560 --> 00:47:56,980  
A hundred grams of bread  
is not much per week.

744  
00:47:56,980 --> 00:48:09,310  
But it was a mixed of barley  
with sawdust, ground glass,

745  
00:48:09,310 --> 00:48:17,590  
and ground sand and the

barley to camouflage and make

746

00:48:17,590 --> 00:48:21,760

that black bread black  
because the Germans loved

747

00:48:21,760 --> 00:48:25,270

the black bread.

748

00:48:25,270 --> 00:48:30,490

And that caused damage  
into your stomach.

749

00:48:30,490 --> 00:48:32,680

How did you feel  
when you would see

750

00:48:32,680 --> 00:48:37,250

the Americans flying overhead?

751

00:48:37,250 --> 00:48:39,600

[SIGHS]

752

00:48:39,600 --> 00:48:49,620

The day came when the Germans  
started to feel the heat.

753

00:48:49,620 --> 00:48:58,350

And the Germans started to feel  
the heat when they found out

754

00:48:58,350 --> 00:49:00,970

that the English were  
coming from one side,

755

00:49:00,970 --> 00:49:02,430

the Russians from  
the other side,

756

00:49:02,430 --> 00:49:05,640

the French from the  
other, and the Americans.

757

00:49:05,640 --> 00:49:12,000

Then they decided to  
put us on a march.

758

00:49:12,000 --> 00:49:14,940

Do you remember  
what date that was?

759

00:49:14,940 --> 00:49:15,794

[INAUDIBLE] tape.

760

00:49:15,794 --> 00:49:18,840

It happened about,  
around April--

761

00:49:18,840 --> 00:49:20,650

April.

762

00:49:20,650 --> 00:49:24,230

[INAUDIBLE] Yep, OK.

763

00:49:24,230 --> 00:49:24,730

Wait.

764

00:49:24,730 --> 00:49:25,539

Give me a second.

765

00:49:25,539 --> 00:49:27,006

I'll give you the high sign.

766

00:49:27,006 --> 00:49:29,940

767

00:49:29,940 --> 00:49:33,990

A few more questions  
about Berga, to go back.

768

00:49:33,990 --> 00:49:37,560

With the terrible  
conditions in the camp,

769



00:49:37,560 --> 00:49:40,710  
when did men start being  
affected by that, aside

770  
00:49:40,710 --> 00:49:45,570  
from men who were killed  
when they were escaping?

771  
00:49:45,570 --> 00:49:48,870  
How many men had died,  
or what happened to them?

772  
00:49:48,870 --> 00:49:53,590

773  
00:49:53,590 --> 00:50:02,580  
The fellows were starting to  
get the effects of the eating

774  
00:50:02,580 --> 00:50:04,500  
and the work exhaustion.

775  
00:50:04,500 --> 00:50:08,670

776  
00:50:08,670 --> 00:50:11,840  
I mean, they couldn't  
move their muscles.

777  
00:50:11,840 --> 00:50:15,900  
they were exhausted.

778  
00:50:15,900 --> 00:50:24,250  
And that was, frankly,  
from the beginning,

779  
00:50:24,250 --> 00:50:28,180  
at the time when we  
got into Berga to live.

780  
00:50:28,180 --> 00:50:33,980

781

00:50:33,980 --> 00:50:39,470

One thing that just went by me  
is, when we got to Berga, well,

782

00:50:39,470 --> 00:50:47,990

they took us to the cremation  
center of the Buchenwald

783

00:50:47,990 --> 00:50:50,780

to bathe us.

784

00:50:50,780 --> 00:50:54,800

Well, we didn't know  
that that was bathing.

785

00:50:54,800 --> 00:50:57,950

We thought they were  
going to cremate us.

786

00:50:57,950 --> 00:50:59,470

Like, the gas  
chambers, the showers?

787

00:50:59,470 --> 00:51:01,820

They took us to  
the gas chambers.

788

00:51:01,820 --> 00:51:03,470

Why did you think that?

789

00:51:03,470 --> 00:51:04,940

We didn't know.

790

00:51:04,940 --> 00:51:11,780

They took us there, and we  
saw the tubings, the pipes,

791

00:51:11,780 --> 00:51:13,250

up ahead.

792

00:51:13,250 --> 00:51:14,570

One was for gas.

793  
00:51:14,570 --> 00:51:18,870  
The other one was for  
water, with a spray.

794  
00:51:18,870 --> 00:51:22,400

795  
00:51:22,400 --> 00:51:26,570  
And when they told us  
to take the clothes off,

796  
00:51:26,570 --> 00:51:29,400  
it's say that they  
were going to fumigate

797  
00:51:29,400 --> 00:51:31,970  
us to take all the lice.

798  
00:51:31,970 --> 00:51:33,650  
Well, fine.

799  
00:51:33,650 --> 00:51:39,500  
But they showed us, and we  
saw, what the Germans had done.

800  
00:51:39,500 --> 00:51:43,340

801  
00:51:43,340 --> 00:51:48,800  
Or they were cremating the  
people, children and mothers

802  
00:51:48,800 --> 00:51:51,950  
and fathers and all that.

803  
00:51:51,950 --> 00:51:59,660  
But while this affected  
a lot of fellows,

804  
00:51:59,660 --> 00:52:08,800  
mostly because they

started to break down--

805

00:52:08,800 --> 00:52:15,620

strength and the  
weakness due to hunger.

806

00:52:15,620 --> 00:52:21,620

And that was just  
right after, oh,

807

00:52:21,620 --> 00:52:24,110

about a week after we got there.

808

00:52:24,110 --> 00:52:24,950

To Berga.

809

00:52:24,950 --> 00:52:25,610

To Berga.

810

00:52:25,610 --> 00:52:32,060

811

00:52:32,060 --> 00:52:42,380

The time that we were  
to leave the area,

812

00:52:42,380 --> 00:52:47,090

there were six fellas that were  
in very critical condition.

813

00:52:47,090 --> 00:52:50,840

And they were to be sent  
to a British hospital.

814

00:52:50,840 --> 00:52:51,750

To leave which area?

815

00:52:51,750 --> 00:52:52,250

I'm sorry.

816

00:52:52,250 --> 00:52:56,150

817  
00:52:56,150 --> 00:52:59,090  
When you were forced  
to leave Berga?

818  
00:52:59,090 --> 00:53:02,730  
Or when you left Bad Orb?

819  
00:53:02,730 --> 00:53:03,230  
Berga.

820  
00:53:03,230 --> 00:53:07,190

821  
00:53:07,190 --> 00:53:10,910  
I had the names on the  
tip, but they slip away.

822  
00:53:10,910 --> 00:53:14,210  
But one of them  
right now is dying.

823  
00:53:14,210 --> 00:53:16,880  
He's still alive,  
but he's dying.

824  
00:53:16,880 --> 00:53:21,230  
He's in no condition  
now, even to talk--

825  
00:53:21,230 --> 00:53:29,870  
Martin [? Wendt. ?]  
And the other one,

826  
00:53:29,870 --> 00:53:35,040  
he died because the  
Germans didn't let me

827  
00:53:35,040 --> 00:53:38,160  
do what I was going to do.

828  
00:53:38,160 --> 00:53:40,140

I had a fountain pen  
with me that I was

829  
00:53:40,140 --> 00:53:43,620  
writing all the time with it.

830  
00:53:43,620 --> 00:53:45,510  
As a matter of fact--

831  
00:53:45,510 --> 00:53:47,610  
well, I'll tell you afterwards.

832  
00:53:47,610 --> 00:53:48,570  
You can tell me now.

833  
00:53:48,570 --> 00:53:50,740  
That fountain pen  
lasted quite a bit.

834  
00:53:50,740 --> 00:53:51,810  
I don't know how.

835  
00:53:51,810 --> 00:53:56,100  
God gave me that ink to last.

836  
00:53:56,100 --> 00:54:00,390  
And the fellow  
that I wanted to--

837  
00:54:00,390 --> 00:54:05,880  
he had diphtheria,  
he couldn't breathe.

838  
00:54:05,880 --> 00:54:07,890  
He was choking.

839  
00:54:07,890 --> 00:54:15,060  
And I asked the guard if I  
could talk to the commander.

840  
00:54:15,060 --> 00:54:23,030  
I said to the commander, this

fella is not going to live.

841  
00:54:23,030 --> 00:54:27,110  
If you don't let me do this,  
you're going to kill him.

842  
00:54:27,110 --> 00:54:29,970

843  
00:54:29,970 --> 00:54:32,670  
And I said, he has diphtheria.

844  
00:54:32,670 --> 00:54:38,040  
All I have to do is make  
a tracheotomy operation

845  
00:54:38,040 --> 00:54:41,395  
and put that thing so he  
can make it to the hospital.

846  
00:54:41,395 --> 00:54:44,280

847  
00:54:44,280 --> 00:54:46,710  
And he was the father of--

848  
00:54:46,710 --> 00:54:48,300  
he was an older fella.

849  
00:54:48,300 --> 00:54:51,060

850  
00:54:51,060 --> 00:54:53,850  
It was a funny name.

851  
00:54:53,850 --> 00:54:56,210  
I have it written in the diary.

852  
00:54:56,210 --> 00:55:00,840

853

00:55:00,840 --> 00:55:03,690

And the German got  
mad at me and hit me

854

00:55:03,690 --> 00:55:08,200

with the butt of the  
rifle, hit me in the face.

855

00:55:08,200 --> 00:55:10,490

And the fella didn't make it.

856

00:55:10,490 --> 00:55:13,850

He couldn't breathe anymore.

857

00:55:13,850 --> 00:55:24,170

And Wayne [? Windresh ?] gave  
me as a gift another Sheaffer.

858

00:55:24,170 --> 00:55:27,780

I hadn't seen a Sheaffer  
for a long time.

859

00:55:27,780 --> 00:55:33,330

Now, were the Jewish  
soldiers that were with you,

860

00:55:33,330 --> 00:55:36,900

did they get treated  
any differently once you

861

00:55:36,900 --> 00:55:40,200

arrived at Berga, or were  
all the men treated the same?

862

00:55:40,200 --> 00:55:44,300

Were they singled out  
again for being Jewish?

863

00:55:44,300 --> 00:55:45,270

Come again?

864

00:55:45,270 --> 00:55:47,160

Were the Jewish



soldiers that were

865

00:55:47,160 --> 00:55:50,130  
with you singled out  
for different treatment

866

00:55:50,130 --> 00:55:51,290  
when you arrived at Berga?

867

00:55:51,290 --> 00:55:54,840

868

00:55:54,840 --> 00:55:58,140  
At that area, it  
seemed to me like it

869

00:55:58,140 --> 00:56:03,143  
was because the way  
they were being treated.

870

00:56:03,143 --> 00:56:04,310  
How were they being treated?

871

00:56:04,310 --> 00:56:21,680  
But Norm Fellman,  
Cohen, Bernard Vogel,

872

00:56:21,680 --> 00:56:23,855  
he was a young  
fella, very docile.

873

00:56:23,855 --> 00:56:27,038

874

00:56:27,038 --> 00:56:34,090  
And he gave up very easy.

875

00:56:34,090 --> 00:56:39,790  
And they forced him to  
work in the tunnels.

876

00:56:39,790 --> 00:56:41,130

And he couldn't make it.

877

00:56:41,130 --> 00:56:43,750

878

00:56:43,750 --> 00:56:49,740

And I asked the  
guard, the commander,

879

00:56:49,740 --> 00:56:55,250

to trade jobs so  
that they can rest.

880

00:56:55,250 --> 00:56:56,840

And they would poke  
me with a rifle

881

00:56:56,840 --> 00:57:00,800

and they said, nein, nein, nein.

882

00:57:00,800 --> 00:57:02,240

They wouldn't let me.

883

00:57:02,240 --> 00:57:03,305

I said, but I'm a medic.

884

00:57:03,305 --> 00:57:08,590

885

00:57:08,590 --> 00:57:11,480

You'd force me to  
do these things,

886

00:57:11,480 --> 00:57:16,390

yet you don't follow it up.

887

00:57:16,390 --> 00:57:19,180

But they didn't care.

888

00:57:19,180 --> 00:57:21,850

They did it with hate.

889

00:57:21,850 --> 00:57:25,180

You mentioned your diary  
and that you were always

890

00:57:25,180 --> 00:57:27,460

writing in it.

891

00:57:27,460 --> 00:57:29,980

What information were you  
recording in your diary?

892

00:57:29,980 --> 00:57:31,565

Let's pause tape, please.

893

00:57:31,565 --> 00:57:33,950

We don't have enough tape to  
[INAUDIBLE] at this point.

894

00:57:33,950 --> 00:57:37,650

But let's run some bars  
at the end, please.

895

00:57:37,650 --> 00:58:36,000