

General Albin Irzyk

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Abstract

General Albin Irzyk was born February 1, 1917 in Salem, Massachusetts as Albin Felix Jerzk but changed to Irzyk as Christened "Irzyk." Albin was the eldest of three siblings. His sister, Flora, was three years younger and his brother, Arthur, was six years younger. He grew up with extremely good values and morals. Albin was a good student and loved books and sports. His high school had regular and classical subjects and he chose the science curriculum. The family was middle class with indoor plumbing, an ice box, no washing machine, coal burning and wood burning stoves, electricity, and running water. It was the Depression and there were times his father was laid off with no pay. His family believed in education and Albin took six years to graduate Massachusetts State College by working full or part-time to help pay his tuition. He was active in ROTC and graduated college on June 10, 1940 with a BA and 2nd Lieutenant in the Horse Cavalry Reserve. First Albin went to Ft. Ethan Allen in Vermont for active duty for two weeks and then went to East Boston Airport for Air Cadet training where he went through physical exams and received notice to report July 1, 1940 to Ft. Ethan Allen as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 3rd Cavalry regiment. Two days later he was the Platoon Leader for 40 Cavalry men and they joined the first squadron of the Cavalry at Ft. Myer, VA where he trained draftees. In fall '41 the 3rd Cavalry went on maneuvers to North Carolina Armored Division. The day after Pearl Harbor, his Regiment, without their horses, guarded all the government buildings all over DC. In spring '42 the officers assembled to start intensive and extensive training program to get ready for war. They became the 3rd Armored Regiment with tanks instead of horses and 40 men. They trained for seven and one-half months in '42 in the Mohave Desert. Albin was promoted to Major in '43 and in December '43 was ordered overseas and arrived in England in January '44. The Division was formed and trained close to Bristol and left for France when the weather was suitable for the invasion. They arrived on July 13 when there was room for them and bivouacked at Granville for three days. Albin was the Operations Officer and lived in a tank for eight or nine months close to several other men. They waited to cross the Saar River into Germany. In March they got back into Germany and went east to the mountains to the Rhine River which was the target. The Americans bombed the Metz Bridge so neither the Germans nor the Americans could get across the Rhine. They finally crossed at Oppenheim where the engineers installed a Pontoon Bridge. They headed east and were commanded to fire on Botha but the Burgomeister surrendered. Then they headed south to Ohrduf and were surprised to find a concentration camp, a sub camp of Buchenwald, with many dead bodies and some humans that looked like skeletons. Albin is writing a book about it. The Battalion, civilians and General Eisenhower viewed the camp. Albin was in Germany during the occupation with his wife, Evelyn, from '48 to '54 and spent two years in Viet Nam and retired as Brigadier General.

Summary

- 00:00 General Albin Irzyk was born Albin Felix Jerzk but changed to Irzyk as christened “Irzyk.” His parents arrived in America and registered at the Catholic Church and the pastor wrote, “Irzyk.” He was born February 1, 1917 in Salem, Massachusetts where he grew up and got married. His parents lived in Salem upon their arrival in the US. Her mother came to the US alone in 1910 at the age of 15 and never saw her parents again. She did not want to live in occupied Poland and work in the fields. Her parents had spoken of America and she and an older girl saved up money to come steerage and were sponsored by the older girls’ grandfather. His father, born in 1895 came to the US in 1904 at 9 years of age with his widowed mother who had remarried, his stepfather and his four brothers.
- 05:00 Albin was the eldest. His sister, Flora, was three years younger and his brother, Arthur, was six years younger. His mother was Sophia Rotzku (?) and his father was Felix Irzyk. Albin loved Salem, a historical city, and grew up in the Polish area. There were Irish and French section but all was mixed. He spoke English at home. His father spoke English without an accent and his mother spoke it with an accent and sometimes spoke Polish which Albin understands. His parents related little of their childhood. His mother’s mother was a midwife who attended childrens’ births and lived in the area occupied by Russia. His mother’s sister arrived later when the family sponsored her. His parents came from towns in Galicia.
- 10:00 They came from farming families. His father’s father was a chauffeur for royalty. The family was Roman Catholic and registered in the church where Albin attended mass every Sunday. His mother was very religious and made rosary. Religion was important to the family. He grew up with extremely good values and morals. He knew the difference between good and bad. If the sign says, “Don’t walk,” he does not walk and if it says, “Don’t park,” he does not park. He is law-abiding. When his mother arrived, she worked in the cotton mill and made sheets. His father’s education ended at the 5th grade and he worked in a shoe factory where he cut white linings. In addition, he rented a store used as a hangout for English and Australian men who played cards and slot machines in the evenings. This made them more prosperous and they rented a home.
- 15:00 His mother was an angel and he had an unusual bonding with her. Albin got along with his father but it was not as close a bonding. Albin never went to his father’s club. They served brew which the local police overlooked. His father got a cut in the winnings of the card players. Albin’s boyhood home was at 6 Derby Street where he lived until he left for college. They owned the 2-story house where they lived upstairs and rented the downstairs. Albin was a good student and liked to study. His school, the Phillips Grammar School, had a branch of the main library. The two librarians taught him to read and love books but, more so, he loved sports. He was a great baseball player and played nightly. There were fields all over. They played seven inning games at twilight. His father watched him play and he played himself. Albin remembers his teacher, Miss

Hamlin who wore a black flowing gown with a lace collar and his seventh grade teacher, Miss Conlin who led their debates. There were affirmative and negative teams and he was the captain of the affirmative team. There were two others on the team. They debated, "The pen is mightier than the sword." He researched it and won the debate. His eighth grade teacher was Mrs. Holmes who was a great grammar teacher. Albin was the speaker at the convocation. His high school had giants, particularly his English teacher. In the long run, when peace comes, it is signed.

20:00 It would not happen if not for the military but all the peace documents must be signed. A tragedy occurred which he never forgot. Dr. Finnegan made house calls and his son, Philip, who was his age was his closest friend. The doctor lived on the outskirts on Salem Commons. After class they would go to one or the other's house. He saw the first radio in the doctor's house. His friend's mother opened the door and said that President Hardy had died and that Coolidge is the new president. They were both in the 4th grade and walked to school together every day. One day, he was told that his friend was not going to school and would go another day. The next day, he was still not going to school. Albin was alarmed as the father was a Harvard graduate and was going to take Phillip to the game. It was Friday night and Phillip was not attending the game so Albin picked up his ticket. Albin's father took him on the train to Boston and they saw the game. During the night, he was awakened and his parents told him that Phillip had died from infantile paralysis. He was his first great friend and they had the same values and played together. When Albin came home from the war, they had a gathering in City Hall and the doctor was there.

25:00 His high school was unusual as it had combined regular and classical courses. The education was comparable to a four-year college as it had great teachers. There were five courses—manual arts and commercial (both trades), scientific, literary and middle (some college subjects and other subjects). He chose scientific as literary required four years Latin and scientific only two years. His first year Latin teacher was outstanding but the second year teacher was a disaster. Therefore, he picked Scientific and leaned toward chemistry but freshman year had Algebra I and after three weeks his teacher left and the English teacher filled in so his math background was poor. The teacher taught social science, history and English. His mother said you could lose your home and money but never your education. His mother attended high school to pass English and the citizenship test but was not in the school system. Then she went to work. She had attended school in Poland until age 15. Albin was in the Polish Church with a Polish pastor and served in Polish and Latin. He kept Lent and gave up the movies. In place of the movies, he went to a museum on Sunday. He made First Communion and confirmation at the Church of St. John the Baptist.

30:00 Albin had to take French, German, two years of Latin, a year of physics and a year of chemistry so it was a broad education. He graduated high school in 1934. His family

bought a radio which his sister, Flora, used to practice shorthand. They did not have a family car. They had indoor plumbing and an ice box. It cost 25 or 35 cents for a block of ice. The ice man had an ice pick to put it in the ice box where it dripped down to a pan. His mother washed clothes by hand. They had both a coal burner and a wood burning stove. The ice lasted a couple of days. They had electricity, running water and an indoor toilet.

35:00 There was a periodic time when they listened to the news on the radio and a daily newspaper was delivered. He got more information from the newspaper than the radio as he did not sit in front of the radio. They read the Salem Evening News and also the Washington Daily Globe. Life was happy in the Roaring 20s. In the 30s there was a Depression when they had a hard time surviving. He was not concerned with Germany. The family had to tighten up. There were layoffs with no income and they had to help others. Life was difficult. His father did not lose his job but there were days when he did not work so his income was less. In their Polish neighborhood, no one went to college. He loved books and his mother believed in education so they decided that he would go to college. He had the grades for college but no money and no job after graduating from high school. That summer he went swimming and played so life was aimless.

40:00 He threw a ball on his front steps on a Saturday and his mother stuck her head out of the window and said that Dr. Stutsky wants to talk to him. It was about a job and he should come in and put on a suit and tie. Dr. Stutsky was a dentist next to a clothing store which had "Salem Days" on the Friday and Saturday before Labor Day. They had a big sale at Danny Donahue so they were looking for help. Albin was interviewed and got a job for Friday and Saturday until 9 PM. He got paid and later was called for the next Saturday. On the left side of the store was furnishings – accessories including ties and handkerchiefs and suits on the right side. There was a Manager for each section and he got acquainted with each. Two months later the Manager of the store left to become Superintendent of a boys' school and John Martin became the Manager of Danny Donahue. Mr. Martin became Albin's benefactor and helped him get to college. Danny Donahue owned the entire block of stores including a drug store and the Essex Hotel. Sometimes Albin was assigned tasks at these other places and he had to change his clothes. They asked him to work full-time and he earned enough for college. The Massachusetts State College was the only one he could afford a year later. Now it is the University of Massachusetts. It was small at the time. After a year, he ran out of money and worked the following year. While at college, he worked at the grant department and the money ran out. He worked for John Martin at Danny Donohue and took six years to get through college.

45:00 He got a job as a busboy in the college dining hall. Albin played football. As a freshman he could not play varsity. He got his letters and when he returned to college, a new coach came. Albin walked on and got a uniform. His father helped him a little. Anytime he

came home, he would work two days or worked more during Christmas. It was the time of Depression. He finished college in 1940. He was accepted at Massachusetts State College but did not know about it. It was a Land Grant Day College which required all males who can pass the physical to take ROTC for two years. The Horse Cavalry was the branch of service so he learned to ride a horse and learn cavalry tactics. At the end of his sophomore year, they selected 25 students to take advanced ROTC. There were a total of 50 students in advanced ROTC.

50:00 They wore an officer's uniform but not in class unless it was a military class and was known as a Military major. He graduated with a BA and 2nd Lieutenant in Cavalry Reserve. It was the Depression and no sign of jobs. He hoped to get a job as a teacher/coach and his professor of Military Science and Tactics recommended he apply for the Thomason Act of Congress. Congressman Thomason of West Point produced Army officers and the Act allowed that ROTC graduates could be selected as officers. He applied before he graduated college on June 10, 1940 and with some classmates went to Ft. Ethan Allen in Vermont. They were in the 3rd Army Cavalry as reserve officers to do active duty for two weeks and qualify next summer. He returned home late June and went to East Boston Airport for Air Cadet training to be an Air Cadet Pilot.

55:00 Albin went through physical exams and got home and received a letter to report July 1, 1940 to Ft. Ethan Allen as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 3rd Cavalry regiment. Two days let he was the Platoon Leader for 40 Cavalry guys. It was similar to when he was a quarterback on the football team. He joined the first squadron of the Cavalry at Ft. Myer, VA and the Cavalry Officer was George S. Patton, Jr. who left in two weeks to join Ft. Benning as Brigadier General. There are about 40 people in a Platoon. A Squadron is the same as a Battalion with 1100 to 1200 men. In the Cavalry there are squadrons and troops with section A, B, etc. The war had started when Albin was a senior in college and knew that he would be in the war as was in ROTC. Two weeks after graduation, there was a picture of Hitler in the newspaper marching down the Champs De Lyce (?). Charles Lindbergh was a famous American Firster who made the first solo flight in '27 across the Atlantic and said it was not our war.

60:00 Churchill and the Brits were the last holdout. Albin had utmost respect of him. They were undergoing super bombing. France, Holland and Belgium surrendered and the British held out. Life would have been different had they capitulated. At Dunkirk, the British Army evacuated and it appeared that Germany was going to attack Britain. Churchill begged the US to help but Roosevelt's hands were tied and could not help them. He compromised and sent 50 overage destroyers under the moniker, "Lend Lease." When Albin entered the military in 1940 there were 178,000 soldiers and we were the 16th strongest in the world or unprepared. The military wanted to get ready as they knew soon they would fight. In 1940 the Draft was passed by one vote so it was close.

- 65:00 He was two or three months in Virginia and ordered to move his squadron to Ft. Myer to join the other squadron as they were required for the first time to be united. They received the first draftees in fall '40, in October. He commanded 100 draftees for one-half day. There were 200 men with 100 horses. He taught map reading, first aid one-half day and horseback riding one-half day. They had a machine gun platoon with 40 men. Ft. Myer expanded the squadron from A to C troops with all draftees and got tents as there were insufficient bunks. The guys from Pennsylvania who did not know horses in three months were in the Machine Gun Platoon and leading a horse. They rode in President Roosevelt's Inauguration. It never happened before. From 178,000 in 1940,
- 70:00 It included North Africa and Sicily's equipment. They built thousands of ships and aircraft in four years. You can see five generations. There was a peak at the end of World War II. They were King of the Hill. In August '55 no other country could compare with the US. It was untouched. The women went to work for the first time. President Roosevelt's third inaugural in January '41 with the troops marching. His Regiment was stationed in Ft. Myer. In fall '41 the 3rd Cavalry went on maneuvers to North Carolina Armored Division. They were training to go to war on horses. Pearl Harbor occurred while he was at Ft. Myer. After maneuvers, he returned and the Regional Commander decided that all officers and their ladies would have a reception at his home on Sunday, December 7th. They put on dress uniform and walked to Number 1, his quarters where you can view all DC. The ladies wore hats, long gowns and gloves and everyone was talking and suddenly it was announced that Pearl Harbor was attacked. Just prior the announcement, Col. Gordon got into a sedan and left for the Munitions Building. He seemed to be a strange host.
- 75:00 They were told to get ready for instructions. The next day the Regiment without their horses guarded all the government buildings all over the city. His Regiment had Conduit Road as they were afraid the Japs would bomb the area. They went to Ft. Hood, Georgia with a new Regiment Commander. In spring '42 the officers assembled to start intensive and extensive training program to get ready for war. His squadron swam their horses across the river and heard a rumor the horses would be taken away which proved true. He witnessed the horses placed on trains. They became the 3rd Armored Regiment with tanks and 40 men. They used Cavalry tactics. It was great training, an easy transition. The tanks became iron horses and were more mobile. There were Jews in Salem. Many were patrons of the store where he worked. Upstairs was Saul Zoll, an orthopedic surgeon. He was his friend and a football player. Albin played on Saturday for the YMHA so had a lot of Jewish friends. There was no effect on his family of world events. He knew that international relations were strained. He heard about Hitler, Chamberlain and Czechoslovakia but was not deeply concerned. He had no knowledge of the persecution of Jews in Europe. The 10th Armored Division was activated on July 15, 1942. He was a First Lieutenant and given a troop of 40 men in a squadron. He sat in an

office one Saturday and a man came in with orders to move to the 4th Armored Division, a new division. He arrived on Saturday and saw the Regional Commander who interviewed him and was assigned a troop so he was at the same level at the headquarters unit for several weeks. He was ordered to leave with tanks and other equipment for team maneuvers for three weeks.

85:00 They would have maneuvers for four days, take a break and then another four days of maneuvers. One morning there was a problem. A runner came and sent to report to the Squadron Commander and he was assigned to Company C, Troop C of a Squadron. He knew the Company Commander of light tanks but he was a lieutenant with a captain's job. They moved the tanks onto trains to the Mohave Desert. General Patton ordered him to organize the desert training area. They trained for seven and one-half months in '42. The desert was an ideal area as it was open and the tanks could go everywhere and one could shoot guns everywhere. They were restricted at Fort Knox. The first battle was in North Africa. He was promoted to Captain and went to Fort Boot (?), Texas and assigned to be Executive Officer. Albin became a Major in '43. They trained in Fort Boot (?) until December '43 when they were ordered overseas. He arrived in England in January '44.

90:00 He had gone from Texas to Oregon first. Then to Camp Miles Standish where they trained, near Salem and left in December. They went over in three ships as it took three ships for a Division. When Albin awoke on the ship, he saw grey ships and grey water as there were several ships in the Armada. It was a difficult crossing from December to January. They took a Northern route to void the U-boats. It was fortunate that none of the ships were hurt. The Germans had spies here so knew they were coming. They landed at Bristol and got on trains which were blacked out and there was an early daylight. They were at Dubise, Wilchi (?) in western England about 25 miles from Bristol near Bath. They moved into a military installation with barracks that were austere. The British had vacated them and there were mess halls. The Armored Division only had men but depots started getting equipment.

95:00 He got calls that tanks were coming so took a truck to the yard to drive them back. A weather dummy covered them. The guns were rusted and they had to clean them. They had training, calisthenics, classes and busy driving and cleaning the vehicles. They got salt water from the long voyage. They were in the cold from January to D-Day, June 6. The Division was formed and trained close to Bristol and left for France. They had to await suitable weather for the invasion. Then went to an area with pup tents and froze though it was July. It was windy and raining. The training stopped as there were no vehicles but had calisthenics.

100:00 There was no bombing in his area. He had intense interest in the progress of the war so listened to BBC. Albin was responsible for training and had good relationships with the

flyers. They told him if there was a cancellation so then he moved his battalion. They had co-action machine guns on the tanks which were tied in with the main guns. When they had a target with the machine gun, they shot. One company attacked on the hill. They heard a strange sound and saw overhead great planes with cables dragging so had gliders. It was D-Day, June 6, 1944. Dr. Clark had a jeep and a radio and rushed to it and confirmed that aircraft were returning to England. They went to the invasion area on July 13 as they needed lots of room for the armored division.

105:00 There was no room with fields and the flooded roads so they might hit the hedgerows. They waited until they established a bridgehead. A farmer might own two squares and had brush so they could not go through so the infantry went in. The fighting was strenuous. Finally on July 13 there was room for them. They landed at Mere de St. Eglise where the parachute was hanging and shot him. They bivouacked at Granville. All the heavy fighting was done but there were remnants left. It was quiet but evidence of a fight there. The Belgium police ushered them. They were grateful to the infantry for helping them land. They stayed in Granville for three days as it was close to the front. They alerted the 4th Infantry Division to do the fighting. They were dirty as had a terrible fight. They were close enough to hear the fighting.

110:00 They were in position with tanks and fought July 26 to 28. The Battalion led the 4th Armored Division. His troops were well trained and started fighting. The group moved like maneuvers but the shots were real. He lived in tanks for eight or nine months where he ate, slept and did the fighting with the same men. Nothing is closer than that. They had four companies of tanks—A, B, C and D. There were 17 Sherman tanks and company C had light tanks. There were 76 tanks in all. They had headquarters, mortar, reconnaissance and service (gas, ammunition, food, and clothing).

115:00 Albin was the Operations Officer. His commander was older and organized the advanced guard and Albin became in charge. He had tanks and attacked and, if he needed reinforcements, he would get it. He was 27 years old as a Commander. He is writing a book about his Battalion liberating Ohrdof Concentration Camp. They went to Constance as assumed the breakup was successful. They made a sweep to the west to the Atlantic Ocean to Lorient. They took a U-boat so almost got court-martialed. There were two ports, Brest and Lorient and they needed ports. They went so fast that they really did not need the ports though told they would need them. They went to Lorient, a major city where subs surrounded it but Lorient did not give up until the end of the war. They went 328 miles in tanks. They had trained together all those months and had to keep going.

120:00 In September Patton had two or three columns. They swept across France in August and got to the Meuse River. It was 328 miles to get there and 82 miles to the Rhine River. Patton said to be there in 10 days. They did not get there. They were all using gasoline –

the American Army (1st, 3rd and 9th), British and Canadian. Gas was at the port and the problem was how to get gas from the port. They had gone so fast so Patton was four or five weeks ahead of time. The Red Ball Express, Truck Companies, on one-way roads, double-loaded, had insufficient gas. The British worshipped General Wingate. The war would have ended in '44 if Eisenhower obtained gas but Montgomery got the gas so they were stuck. Three divisions went to catch the bridges in Holland. They were given supplies and 24 hours and it was a disaster as there was famine of supplies. The weather was ideal for the tanks as the days were long and the nights were short but it started to rain.

125:00 The Allies most effective weapon was they attacked in November. The Germans placed defenses as they knew they were coming. The mud was so deep. There was sleet, snow, and rain so the tanks could not go through. November was horrible month and was followed by the Battle of the Bulge. December 23rd was the worst day of Albin's life. His belief that women in the Army could not have survived. It was the coldest winter ever facing the vicious Germans. They were soaking wet and no place to eat or sleep as the rain was coming in. It was indescribable. He was in the tank for 10 months with five men where they ate, slept, fought and read letters from their family so they bonded. He spent Christmas '44 there. The 4th Armored Division broke into Bastogne on December 26th and a week later, their division and two others attacked the neck of the German advance. Except for Luxembourg, they pulled out and sat there a month as had to cross the Saar River that was raging and ice cold. It was for three weeks from late January to the second week in February.

130:00 In March they got back into Germany and went east to the mountains to the Rhine River which was the target. They wanted to get the bridge intact to cross the Rhine River. The Germans withdrew to the bridge in Ermetz. Albin was looking forward to seeing the Rhine and he saw that it was majestic, broad and brown-green. He saw the Germans fleeing the Ermetz Bridge. Koblenz and Annaba were close by. He saw all the equipment jamming the German roads. The bridge was built in 1917. They were 2 and ½ kilometers to the bridge. It was a railroad bridge but had tanks and other vehicles so the men could cross. It was a spectacle to see. It was late afternoon, getting dark and there were no trees to block the view and no place to hide. The German 88s were firing at them with dual guns so they pulled back. The American artillery were shooting all night long killing the Germans. Albin saw the bridge going up as he arrived. It was a massive bridge as it blew up with a massive noise. The German men, horses and vehicles all blew up. The bridge came down with the Germans killed and their vehicles destroyed but the Americans did not get across.

135:00 They took prisoners the first day. On July 28th they took 123 prisoners in Normandy and all along the way, they took prisoners wearing their long coats who gave up. Albin's job was to go forward and all the men he saw on the bridge looked tall and able. Along the

way, he sent prisoners back to the infantry, the MPs and those responsible for prisoners. He placed a shade over those who were killed and the grave inventory people noted them down. He turned south as they thought to go further to Worms and find another bridge. If they went over a bridge, they would save time but did not find another one until Oppenheim. The banks were close and the engineers installed a Pontoon Bridge. The 5th Infantry and the 8th Battalion crossed the bridge where Patton gloried by peeing into the Rhine River on January 24, 1945 where Albin had already crossed. His Division headed northeast to the Marne River to Hanau, 50 miles east of Frankfurt.

140:00 April 1st they took the Bad Herzfeld Autobahn to Eisenach. During the Cold War, the Iron Curtain was between Bad Herzfeld and Eisenach which is the first city east of the Iron Curtain. They were moving fast to Weimar and Kelmütz with scattered resistance. The Weimar River near Eisenach had no bridge. Spickwell built a bridge there April 2nd. The Germans got aggressive and had to fight hard to make the bridgehead and 15 German fighters came and destroyed it and they built it again. They got across on April 3rd, bypassing Eisenach and attacked Gotha. They thought if they got on an Autobahn, they could go fast. They headed east and stopped as the bridge was blown up and the Germans were shooting. They reached the Red Tag road on April 4th and bivouacked. The sun awoke him the next day and the Combat Commander on the radio indicated that Gotha is a built-up area and they should fight for it if they do not surrender by 11.

145:00 They should fire on the city and damage it. The Burgomeister said that Gotha surrenders. They went through the city and the combat commanders waved and Albin got down from his tank and was told to go south to Ohrdruf. It was a large underground complex with a communication center to house the German Army that left Berlin so he must uncover and seize it. It was 15 or 20 miles away so they moved out and got resistance from machine guns and artillery but no tanks advanced. As the late afternoon approached, he heard on the intercom say, "bodies." They seized Ohrdruf and cut roads to seal everything and did not see the underground complex. It was dark and all was secure. The D company was in command. The platoon was on the left.

150:00 They overran something. There were bodies everywhere. They did not know what it was. It was dark so the next morning they drove the jeep to the location and got to the fringe of woods where there was a terrible smell. They got to the clearing which was like a parade ground and thought they saw an elliptical circle of clothing bags but it was human beings. There were 75 to 80 bodies with all their feet pointing in. They were skeletal with sores. They were emaciated and each had a red dot on the face or chest. They were so thin. There was blood all over the ground. He was shocked. He did not know what he was seeing. The smell was stifling. It was a deathly smell but more complicated. He saw buildings like outhouses in a row with a terrible smell and opened the door. From floor to ceiling were skeletal bodies, some with clothes and some had no clothes. There was lime covering them but you could see sores. He slammed the door

and tried to compose himself. He circled around and to the woods. In front of him was a huge hamburger grill with rails and a gray arch.

- 155:00 It was knee deep with skeletons and bones. The bodies had been burned on the pyre. Later, Albin learned that 4,000 bodies were disposed. He had been in combat since July and saw wounded Americans and Germans. He saw people with their guts hanging out this was incomprehensible. He could not imagine what humans could do this to humans. He sent word to him company to see this. About 40 thin emaciated men came out of the woods. When the Germans heard the Americans were coming, they vanished and the prisoners hid in the woods. They asked for food but Albin's company only had field rations and they vomited it. Later Albin found out that there was every ethnic group including Poles, Swedes and Jews and that the prisoners in Ohrduf were slave laborers. An underground complex was 15 kilometers east in Armstead. The laborers had been trucked from Ohrduf to the complex. The next day Albin had his soldiers view it. Colonel Sears, the Combat Commander, went to Ohrduf and took 25 to 30 citizens in trucks to view the circle of bodies.
- 160:00 They all denied knowing about it. It was three kilometers from town. That night two people, a man and a woman, confessed. There is a photo in the Holocaust Museum of Eisenhower looking at Ohrduf, a sub camp of Buchenwald. There were death marches from Ohrduf to Buchenwald. Instantly everyone was notified about Ohrduf by radio. After three or four days the 89th Infantry closed up. Albin's company waited until the area was secured and went east. On April 12, Eisenhower's staff told him about Ohrduf and they visited it. Eisenhower said he wanted every newspaperman, war correspondent to visit so there would be no denial in 60 years later. General Patton and General Bradley visited the place. Patton was overcome from the smell and did not want to show it in front of his troops. A few years later Albin and his wife saw Dachau. At his original view of Ohrduf, he continued fighting.
- 165:00 Before then, he heard the Russians found something in Poland. Concentration camps had never been mentioned by the military. This confirmed there was such a thing as a concentration camp. It was the first one found. Soon they reached Buchenwald. Eisenhower called Marshall who called Churchill. Albin's company went east toward Dresden to Chemnitz where he pulled off the road. He spoke to the Combat Commander by radio who responded they had gone 25 miles beyond the restraining line where the American and Russian forces agreed not to go further than Chemnitz. They went 200 miles south to the Danube River and turned into Valandra, Czechoslovakia. It was the liberated part of Czechoslovakia before Pilsen. What Albin saw in Ohrduf has never left him. Three hundred Jewish people celebrated traditions at the beautiful City Hall complex. He never forgot what he saw. You have to see it to believe it.

170:00 Previously there was tension between Montgomery and the American Army. Albin retired in '71 and has kept very busy. It has been rewarding and eventful. He has had marvelous times since he retired. He spent two years in Viet Nam, commanded elephants in Saigon, had two tours in the Cold War, and was in Germany during the occupation from '48 to '54. There was no police force and no border police during the occupation but there were DP Camps. The Army created restabulary to help the Germans rehabilitate themselves. He was stationed in Stuttgart. In Fulda they had a German guard. Albin was Regimental Commander when he and his wife reported to Fulda. The Lord Mayor had good relations with him and vice versa. They invited the Lord Mayor to be commander of his regiment one day and visit the barracks, mess hall, airfield and tour the border by helicopter. There would be a parade in the Mayor's honor. Evelyn and Albin held the Regimental Ball.

175:00 The Offices Club was too small. It was held at Statsdon which had beautiful chandeliers which the Mayor approved. The priest from the church with the dome attended. Thee wee good relations with the city of Fulda. The Monsignor was a wonderful individual and went to Rome to see Pope John who had been the Cardinal of Poland. He went from Poland to Rome to become Pope and stopped in Fulda where the remains of the saint was in the cathedral where Catholicism started. He came twice to their home, Veronica al Lago and visited Albin's daughter in DC. They did not hide what they did. It is a puzzle how Hitler became a leader. Albin, promoted to Brigadier General, said he enjoyed going down Memory Lane.

180:00