

**Time-coded notes of Interview with Philip Drell  
February 10, 1984**

01:00 He was born in Chicago in 1919. He was a student at the Chicago Teacher's College. However, he enlisted in September 1942, because he was about to be drafted.

02:00 He was assigned to the Special Motion Pictures Coverage Unit, which covered World War Two news in Europe. He covered the events in Normandy, as well as the Liberation of Paris, for example.

03:00 George Stevens, a Hollywood director, was in charge of the unit. Irwin Shaw, Lester Hemingway, and Ernest Hemingway were also involved.

04:00 He arrived in Paris the day it was liberated, and he agreed with George Stevens that this was the day the war should have ended. His Unit convinced a German to go up in front of the French Chamber of Deputies waving a tablecloth, to convince the Nazi's to surrender. He got the photo of this.

05:00 Between 500 and 600 Germans were in there. He went in and actually negotiated with them---in Yiddish!

06:00 He went into the Dachau camp to take pictures. He said he had not heard anything about the camp before arriving at Dachau.

07:00 He had only seen the atrocities in France, etc Nazi's had put people in buildings and then set the buildings on fire. His unit had to take pictures of the charred corpses.

08:00 According to him, there was tremendous activity in Dachau -- Lots of shooting, and S.S. guards being beaten to death by the liberated prisoners.

09:00 Shows clips from the film he shot at Dachau: heaps of corpses.

10:00 There were 2 photographers/videographers, one driver, and one writer in each little group. He is not sure how many little groups of four there were in the whole unit. At Dachau, one photographer in the unit -asked prisoners who could speak English to sit down and relate their stories on film-- right then and there. Mr. Drell advises the interviewer to try and get hold of that film.

11:00 He has a few photos that he took at Dachau. However, most of his work is contained in the film they shot during the liberation of Dachau. He begins showing his collection of photos. The camera zooms in on each of them.

-photo of the sign for Dachau (plain sign, to indicate the name of the town)

-photo of another Dachau sign (a big one, pointing in the direction of the camp)

-photo of piles of bodies. An S.S. guard battered to death lies on top of one heap of bodies.

12:00 When he arrived in Dachau, people in the town played ignorant as to where the camp was. He says that his unit had to be threatening in order to get information/directions.

-photo of the crematory with piles of bodies outside.

13:00 He says that the inside rooms of the crematory were loaded with bodies. In addition, there were huge piles of bodies lying outside. Evidently, the camp had been in a stage of "over production" it could not burn the bodies fast enough.

14:00 S.S. Guards that had been in hiding had been ferreted out, and the prisoners were trying to kill them. Americans had to try to keep them alive.

15:00 He spoke with the S.S. guards. These, people referred to them as "garbage people." He stopped talking to them after a while, he couldn't get anything out of them.

16:00 He spoke with survivors too. There were lots of children. According to him, it was "pretty bad" talking to them--they had fleas. At first, he gave them anything he had (cigarettes and chocolate), but they would just wolf it down. He recounts: "After a while, there was really no point in talking to them. They were pathetic."

17:00 He did not get to talk to people that much, however. His job was to take pictures. The writer in their group did most of the talking, he got most of the information. Mr. Drell was supposed to keep with the camera. He did not stop taking pictures/shooting film because he was afraid he would miss something.

18:00 The prisoners had a huge thanksgiving ceremony after the liberation. The Jews wanted to hold their own ceremony but the Poles said no doing. The Jews did have their own ceremony, everyone attended (of all nationalities)except the Poles. He has photos of this ceremony. He says that he thought it was a bitter experience--he figured that having been fellow prisoners, and having lived through the same experience, the Poles would have wanted to go.

19:00 After Dachau, they went back through Belgium to a displaced persons camp, and took more photos there. He shows some of these photos to the camera.

20:00 -photo: of his friends/colleagues during the war.  
-photo of General Leclercq, liberator of Paris.

21:00 -photos of Paris.  
-photos of member of the French underground.  
-photo of Ernest Hemingway.

22:00 -photos of the liberation of Paris (August 25, 1949)

23:00 -photo of a French church.

He describes that the Nazis put all the people of the village in this church, then they burned the church and killed everyone in it.

24:00 -photos of several allied generals.

25:00 He was trained for 2-3 months before he actually started photographing. He shows the actual camera he used during the war and explains how it was very difficult to use.

26:00 He does not recall how long he was at Dachau. He and his group stayed in one of the houses where the SS officers had lived (right nearby the camp). He took home an album belonging to the SS officer who had lived in the house which he and his group had taken over. The officer's name was Max Schmitt (at least, this was the name written inside of the album).

27:00 He shows the photos contained in the album:

- photo of Russian/East Polish prisoners
- photos of tanks and planes
- photo of SS men whipping prisoners
- photo of SS men torturing prisoners
- photo of SS men cutting off prisoners' beards

All the photos were captioned in German, and had the SS Archives stamp on the back.

28:00 His unit went back to Paris after Dachau. He returned to the United States 3-4 months later. Back home, he told people about what he had seen at Dachau. In order to enter the Dachau camp, they had to get sprayed with DDT: workers put hoses up their arm sleeves, and up the legs of their pants. He says that his group became acclimated to the situation, they began to crack jokes ("black humor"). He admits that such humor was "vicious," but it was the only way to deal with the situation.

29:00 He says that people who refused to believe that the Holocaust happened are "certified crazy" -- pictures don't lie.  
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