

**Time-coded notes for Interview with Douglass Monsson
December 1989**

01:00:00 Born in Chicago, Illinois. Was a cadet at Tilden High School and at the University of Illinois.

01:00:30 Was in the Reserve, commissioned in 1940.

01:01:00 Was stationed at various camps in the U.S. and served the European Theater.

01:01:30 Landed in France after the 3rd Army, one of the later units.

01:02:00 Was a major at the time.

01:02:30 Early one morning, about April 9th or 10th out driving.

01:03:00 Met a general in a jeep, who ordered that all men in the division be sent to view the horror camp.

01:03:30 The camp had actually been opened up about April 7th.

01:04:00 The earlier pictures showed the prisoners in stripped clothes. But when we got there, they were naked.

01:04:30 We drove up and parked. The bodies all had bullet holes in the head. This was right outside of Ohrdruf. There were ditches filled with bodies.

01:05:00 German civilians were filling the graves on order of an American general. I was the first division staff officer there.

01:05:30 Had heard nothing about these camps. But had seen American prisoners who had been brutally treated.

01:06:00 For five days after that we took no prisoners. Was told that the general wanted prisoners.

01:06:30 We walked in told the men to look but not to see; we were under orders.

01:07:00 I saw one fat man among the other thin ones. I asked about him.

01:07:30 A man said that he had killed him, that he was a stool pigeon. But learned later the "fat" man was actually the camp commandant.

01:08:00 He was a trustee. Saw the Mayor of Ohrdruf. He said they were going to bury them.

01:08:30 We walked over to the other side of the camp and there we saw the ovens.

01:09:00 They were like the old-fashioned open hearth furnaces. There were bones in there, but no bodies.

01:09:30 We saw hundreds of bones there.

01:10:00 There was a river nearby. Hundreds of bones, people they didn't have time to bury.

01:10:30 Saw the delousing stations, where people were gassed. Outside, hundreds of thousands of bones, people who weren't buried.

01:11:00 Patton came in there, Sgt. Finnegan got sick, Corporal Weill (ph) got sick, and Sgt Grant (ph), he was a Jew, he did not get sick.

01:11:30 An officer had to accompany men to services, and DM did.

01:12:00 During that time they captured an Untergaulieter (ph), a lieutenant governor.

01:12:30 I had some dinner; others couldn't eat the whole day. By the time we were through, other groups were going through.

01:13:00 When we got back to quarters, everyone had long faces. I don't know whether we took any prisoners from then on. I know how the men felt.

01:13:50 On the second day, Patton came in. Then Bradley. By that time, we were gone.

01:14:00 We captured Lintz (pg) and the German-Hungarian Danube Fleet.

01:14:30 You were in the camp . . . I was in the camp for about 3 hours. Did you speak to any of the survivors? There was only one survivor that I saw, one man.

01:14:30 Gen Reinhart told the mayor of Ohrdruf that if he didn't give the dead a Christian burial, he would see that the mayor was shot.

01:15:00 Two days later the mayor and his wife hanged himself. That's in the record.

01:15:30 Q: Did you ask the mayor whether he knew what was going on?

A: No.

01:16:00 Eisenhower and Bradley were quite angry.

01:16:30 The 4th Armored Division Combat Command B his Belden two days later. Belsen was a bigger camp.

01:17:00 Later, in Austria, were right near Mauthausen (ph). There were supposed to be 100,000 there; there were only 42,000 left. The Germans had killed the others.

01:17:30 There were American nurses there, taking care of the survivors. This was about May, 1945.

01:18:00 Monsson stayed out of the camps. He had his own responsibilities. He was in charges of recreation.

01:18:30 Tells story of being fined \$150 for not wearing a helmet.

01:19:00 More story telling

01:19:30 Q: What about reactions of other men? I would say that about 10 per cent of the men got sick.

01:20:00 Q: What did they say? About the Germans - those dirty sons of bitches. That also was what Patton said. The were shocked and disgusted.

01:20:30 Q: Those were your reactions as well? My reactions - I thought - Hitler, that son of a b. . . If I could have him here right now I would put my .45 right in the middle of his - now that's the way I felt. Maybe I would rather have seen him tried by a general court's - a general court.

01:21:00 Asked to make card files - had carpenters - to hold 100,000 card files. But there were only 45,000 left because the Germans had killed them.

01:21:30 At Lintz, met up with the Russians.

01:22:00 Describes putting out fires in Lintz (ph).

01:22:30 Above continues.

01:23:00 Describes insignia on German uniforms distinguishing policemen, firemen, electricians. Q: Have to go back a minute.

01:22:00 You said that when you first saw the bodies, they had clothes, but later they didn't...

01:22:30 Yes, there's a picture I sent that show that.

01:23:00 Clothing was at a premium.

Q: I want to go back to your feelings. Looking back at it 40 years later, what do you feel now?

01:23:30 I think it was the most bastardly thing I ever had in my life. I've seen a lot of things in my life, as a soldier, a parachuter, an athlete.

01:24:00 It should never be forgotten. Some people say it didn't happen, but I was there; I saw it.

01:24:30 I hope it never happens again.

01:25:00 My feeling now is that I wanted to see them tried by an international tribunal.

01:25:30 Q: Were you happy with the results of the Nuremberg trials?

01:26:00 Yes. and no. I wasn't there. I came home because my father was dying.

01:26:30 Interviewer: Sorry but have to wrap this up. Thank you. You're welcome. By the way, about 90 percent of the division saw that. The others were on duty.