

-TITLE-HERBERT JOSEPH
-I_DATE-NOVEMBER 27, 1989
-SOURCE-UNITED JEWISH FEDERATION HOLOCAUST CENTER PITTSBURGH
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-EXCELLENT
-IMAGE_QUALITY-EXCELLENT
-DURATION-
-LANGUAGES-ENGLISH
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
-CONTENTS-
0:38 Both parents were born in Byelorussia. Herbert's father was studying to be a rabbi.

0:55 Herbert's father came to the United States and escaped from the tsarist army around age 20.

1:32 Herbert's mother came to the US at age 6. His father wanted to be a fabric cutter in New York, but ended up in Pittsburgh because he had an aunt there. His parents had a very good marriage.

2:27 Herbert was born in January, 1923. He had one sister, but she died from epilepsy when she was 24.

2:51 Herbert graduated from the University of Pittsburgh as a business major.

3:02 When asked if he had a religious home, Herbert answered that his home was not religious, but secular. His father, however, was very interested in Jewish culture and was a member of the Jewish Culture Circle in Pittsburgh.

4:49 His family was lucky during the depression. His father owned a movie theater in Pittsburgh and rented it out to Warner Brothers so they always had money.

5:34 In college at Pittsburgh, Herbert was in ROTC. In 1943 they wouldn't let him finish school; he was sent to basic training and then stationed at several places around the country.

6:06 He felt that he was expected to go fight. He was sent overseas. He was 20 years old at the time.

6:44 He arrived in Lehavre at a replacement depot. They then took boxcars across. He was in the 80th division.

7:02 He was a 2nd Lieutenant and he had his own platoon. He fought at the Battle of the Bulge.

9:12 After the battle, at the end of 1944, he got sick from being in foxholes. He was in the hospital for 3 weeks. They then crossed the Main River to Germany. They travelled across Germany, fighting all the way, and finally arrived in Chemnitz. That is right near the border of Czechoslovakia. There was a camp there.

9:32 Herbert never entered the camp, but he saw people running, carrying big sacks of flour. He could see that they were obviously hungry.

9:53 Herbert's outfit, the 80th division had opened up the camp. He says that he was glad to see them free.

10:04 He says that he didn't know the extent of the Holocaust and that he had had no preparation for what he would see.

10:38 Herbert recalls that his dog tags were taken and the "H" which stood for Jewish was removed, in case he was captured, no one would know that he was Jewish. He was in Austria when the war ended in Austria on May 7, 1945.

12:36 He earned a battlefield promotion and a General McBride gave him a Bronze Star for heroic action.

13:53 There were no other Jews in Herbert's company and he recalls hearing anti-Semitic comments from the officers and others he was fighting with.

15:20 In October, 1945 Herbert was transferred to the Military Police in Starnberg, Germany. Then he was transferred to Landsberg, Germany. That is where Hitler had been in prison and where he wrote MEIN KAMPF.

17:23 They had to act as police not for the prisoners, but for the military. Those who were convicted at the Nuremberg Trials were sent to the Landsberg prison for execution.

17:39 The Landsberg Prison was a United States operation.

18:17 The military police were asked to "help" with the execution of convicted SS troops.

18:42 Their duty was to escort the prisoners from the cell to the scaffold where they were hung. They waited until the prisoners died and then recorded the time of death.

19:17 On the days of May 28 and 29, 1946, they hung 28 convicted German SS officers.

20:41 Herbert says that after having been through what he had been through, he felt as though the SS officers deserved exactly what

they got, this retribution.

21:41 Herbert first mentions the riot in the Landsberg displaced persons camp.

21:46 People who had been in concentration camps were brought there until they could be replaced in various countries.

22:17 The former prisoners were housed in barracks until the US government placed them. Landsberg was once a concentration camp.

23:24 2 displaced persons, boys that had been guarding the barracks, were found missing. Herbert got a call ordering the military police to find out what was going on.

23:57 In the mean time, another displaced person went into Landsberg and told a story that these 2 boys had been taken by German civilians.

24:30 This story spurred a riot in the displaced persons camp. They overturned a bus and stabbed German civilians. The military police were called in to quell the riot.

25:47 The rioters were everywhere, attacking German civilians. The military police calmed things down.

26:10 Herbert told his men not to use their guns or nightsticks except for self defense. In this manner they got things quieted down with no outward use of force.

26:48 Everything was quiet by noon. Another company commander came in later yelling and screaming that he was "sick of this" and he told the men to shoot to kill. This was a Captain Mott.

27:10 This statement ruined all that Herbert and his men had done and everything started up again. It took 3-4 hours to resettle it again, once again, without using force.

27:39 Between 20 and 30 of the rioters were arrested.

28:20 They went to trial and were convicted. They were given sentences ranging from 6 months to 2 years, but they appealed. Herbert does not know what happened to the appeal.

28:59 There was no real communication between Herbert's men and the displaced persons with whom they had to deal.

29:35 Herbert talks about how he sympathizes with the displaced persons. They went from the concentration camps to the displaced persons camp. They lived in barracks while the civilians had nice homes. Their reaction of rioting was understandable since they believed that 2 of the men had been captured by German civilians.

30:53 The rioters were mostly men, in their 20's.

31:30 Herbert received commendation for diplomatically stopping the riot without too much bloodshed.

33:05 There were commendations for Herbert's entire force for their handling of the riot.

38:23 Herbert talks about a lot of false reporting that occurred about the execution of SS criminals and about the riot.

39:51 In July, 1946 Herbert returned to the States and was sent to Fort Dix.

41:27 Herbert recalls what a horrible thing it is to be in combat. It was a long time before he could talk about his experiences to anyone.

41:37 When he got back to the States, he returned to the University of Pittsburgh and graduated. Right after that he got married.

42:26 The people in Landsberg said that they did not know about the atrocities that were going on, even in their own town.

TODAY

44:49 Herbert feels very skeptical about reuniting Germany. He fears that they will be too powerful.

45:26 He cannot forgive Germany. He saw too much and experienced too much to be able to forgive them. He leaves it up to the younger generation to forgive Germany.

49:42 He is still not a "religious" man.

52:34 He stresses that we must not forget what happened. We should all know what happened so that it can never occur again.

53:45 He has friends, a couple, who were in camps. The woman was experimented on by SS doctors. They put a hole in her back. She has 3 children now, but 1 of them has cerebral palsy.

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