

HOLOCAUST ARCHIVE PROJECT

Name of Interviewee	AL HORWITZ	
Name of Interviewer	Zev Harel	Date 9/6/84
Name of Abstractor	Michelle Heyer	Date 4/16/89

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Al Horwitz, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, was part of an American army division which liberated Nordhausen concentration camp.

Al served as a staff sergeant in the 104th Infantry Division, 387th Field Artillery. His unit went overseas in June 1944. After landing in France, they were part of the battle to free the port of Antwerp, Belgium. They were also active in Holland.

The division moved into Germany through Aachen, as part of the drive to Koln. From there they went to Nordhausen, in the Hartz Mountains. Nordhausen concentration camp was attached to a German bomb factory, and the inmates were Jews and political prisoners. While Al was there, Generals Eisenhower and Bradley toured the camp.

Al then moved on to Leipzig, where he helped set up the "Lucky Strike" DP camp. He was in Leipzig when the famous conference was held to divide post-war Germany.

Al returned to the U.S. in June 1945. He was discharged from the army shortly after that.

He now lives in Cleveland, Ohio, and is in the life insurance business. He has a wife and three children.

ABSTRACT

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PRESENT LIFE

In life insurance business. Lived in Cleveland most of his life.

AL IS DRAFTED IN 1941

Entered army as a private in Cincinnati. By the time they left for Europe, in summer 1944, he was a staff sergeant in the 104th Infantry Division, 387th Field Artillery.

HIS UNIT IS FIRST AMERICAN DIVISION TO LEAVE FOR EUROPE

Before going overseas, they were stationed at Camp Adam, Oregon, went on maneuvers in the Calif. and Ariz. deserts, and spent time in Wash. state. Left for Europe in June 1944.

AL SHOWS A PHOTO OF THE DIVISION

Commanding general was Terry Allen. Division was part of the 1st Army, later attached to the 9th Army, a Canadian unit, a British unit and a free Polish unit. Al's unit held the record for longest period of continual combat in Europe.

THE UNIT LANDS IN EUROPE AT UTAH BEACH

THE MEN TALK A LOT ON THE VOYAGE ABOUT FEAR OF COMBAT

AL IS MARRIED, HAS A DAUGHTER. WRITES HOME FREQUENTLY

Not allowed to mention names of towns where he fought.

AS A JEW, AL HAS GREATER INTEREST IN FATE OF EUROPEAN JEWS

Al felt good to be part of war against Hitler. Gentile soldiers felt good, too. They had a strong sense of purpose.

AL AND OTHER JEWISH SOLDIERS HAVE SERVICES

One other Jew in Al's unit, Larry Goodman, now lives in White Plains, N.Y. They and other Jews in division held services with visiting Jewish chaplain.

AL KNOWS ABOUT HOLOCAUST BEFORE GOING TO EUROPE

Got information from Time Magazine, newspapers, radio. Saw pictures of Kristallnacht. But wasn't aware of the true extent of the violence.

AL IS AT NORDHAUSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP WHEN EISENHOWER AND
BRADLEY TOUR IT

AL'S UNIT MOVES THROUGH FRANCE, INTO BELGIUM AND HOLLAND

Fought in battle to liberate part of Antwerp.

THEY MOVE INTO GERMANY THROUGH AACHEN. PART OF "DRIVE TO KOLN"

Crossed Rhine into central Germany after Koln. Eventually
joined Russian troops on April 26, 1945.

AL IS IN LEIPZIG WHEN GERMANY IS DIVIDED

AL NEVER MEETS A GERMAN WHO ADMITS TO BEING A NAZI

HE SPEAKS YIDDISH. SOMETIMES SERVES AS GERMAN TRANSLATOR

IN HOLLAND, AL SEES FEW CIVILIANS. THOSE HE SEES ARE VERY
FRIENDLY. PEOPLE IN BELGIUM ALSO FRIENDLY, ENTHUSIASTIC

AL ATTENDS A CEREMONY: "SPONSORS FOR THE DEDICATORY SERVICES OF
THE FIRST CONSECRATION FOR A SEFER TORAH" IN OCTOBER 1944

Jewish-American soldiers were attendees. Captured Nazi
soldiers set up, then cleaned up afterward.

AL SHOWS A BOOK - "TIMBERWOLF TRACKS" - THE HISTORY OF HIS
DIVISION

AL ARRIVES AT NORDHAUSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP

Part of the Ruhr drive into central Germany. Camp was at
the base of Hartz Mountains. Germans had a V1 and V2 bomb
factory there. Workers were camp inmates. Also political
prisoners. Al's unit was told they were approaching a
concentration camp. They could smell decay from human flesh
before they saw it.

AL SHOWS PICTURES HE TOOK ON ARRIVAL AT NORDHAUSEN

AMERICANS FORCE GERMANS FROM TOWN OF NORDHAUSEN TO BURY CORPSES

Townpeople claimed they had nothing to do with cam

AL AND OTHERS CRY UNCONTROLLABLY WHEN THEY FIRST SEE CAMP

Felt ashamed to be part of human race. Couldn't believe or
understand what they were seeing.

EISENHOWER TOURS NORDHAUSEN. HE, TOO, CRIES

SEEING NORDHAUSEN STRENGTHENS AL'S CONVICTION IN FIGHTING

Brought unit closer together.

AL AND LARRY GOODMAN FIND FIVE OR SIX POLISH-JEWISH GIRLS HIDING
IN A BARN

Girls couldn't believe Al and Larry were Jewish. Al and
Larry fed them, took care of them until they went to a DP camp.

AFTER NORDHAUSEN, THEY ADVANCE TO LEIPZIG. SPEND 195 CONSECUTIVE
DAYS IN BATTLE

THE DIVISION SETS UP A DP CAMP

Near Leipzig. Most residents were Eastern Europeans rescued
from French concentration camps.

AL FEELS PROUD OF HIS WARTIME ACTIVITIES

Helped save mankind - Nazis wouldn't have stopped with Jews.

AL IS DISGUSTED BY GERMANS WHO WOULDN'T ADMIT THEY KNEW ABOUT
HOLOCAUST. BUT LOOKING BACK, HE CAN'T BLAME THEM

AL COMES HOME, JUNE 1945

Wife meets him in N.Y. He'd brought a quart of Chanel No. 5
all the way from France, dropped it in Pennsylvania Station.

THE DP CAMP HE SET UP IS CALLED "LUCKY STRIKE"

AL IS ELIGIBLE FOR DISCHARGE, BUT HAS TO GO TO CALIF. FIRST

The unit was going on to Japan. Al had to go with them to
Calif. before being discharged.

AL RETURNS TO CLEVELAND

TODAY, AL HAS A SISTER IN CLEVELAND, A CHILD IN CLEVELAND AND TWO
ON THE WEST COAST. HE HAS SHARED HIS EXPERIENCES WITH THEM

AL HAS NO SPECIAL MESSAGE. HE FEELS THE HOLOCAUST SPEAKS FOR
ITSELF, AND HOPES WE WILL NOT ALLOW HISTORY TO REPEAT ITSELF