

Herbert J. Bitter

RG-50.106*0065

Born - August 14, 1919 in New York City

Tried to join draft at age 21, rejected 6 times

Spring 1943 - accepted on 7th try after hernia operation

Sent to Southampton, England to 628th Light Equipment Engineers Company

Attached to divisions of 1st Army, 3rd Army and 7th Army

June 1944 - Landed on Utah Beach on D Day +10 under fire, harrowing experience

Passed through to Germany in Aachen

Back to France during Battle of the Bulge, then into Germany again.

April 1945 - As a liberator, went into Ohrdruf Camp in first group - saw bodies outside the

ovens and a pit of 500 bodies covered with lime. Stayed for a day with his

company. Contacted the Civil Government of the US Army. Returned next day and saw Generals Eisenhower and Bradley. He thinks it was on April 4, 1945, not April 12. Felt a kinship with the prisoners, spoke Yiddish to them

Came across factory in Cologne - hundreds of Jewish girls who had been raped and mistreated, spoke to them in Yiddish. Brought them prayer books and food.

Especially affected by women's stories.

Went to Dresden, Weida and Marseille, sent home to US

Did not talk about his experiences at first, but always thinks about what he saw

Active in Jewish groups now, is a retired manufacturer's representative.