

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:00,700

2

00:00:00,700 --> 00:00:03,260

The United States Holocaust
Memorial Museum Volunteer

3

00:00:03,260 --> 00:00:05,210

Collection interview
with George Leonard.

4

00:00:05,210 --> 00:00:08,000

This is tape 2, side A. And
you have been telling me

5

00:00:08,000 --> 00:00:11,150

about encountering
a German patrol

6

00:00:11,150 --> 00:00:14,310

and then making your
way away from them.

7

00:00:14,310 --> 00:00:17,060

8

00:00:17,060 --> 00:00:26,630

The Americans I contacted were
not my own division or company,

9

00:00:26,630 --> 00:00:30,470

and they would not believe that
I was an American because there

10

00:00:30,470 --> 00:00:32,689

had been many, many, many
Germans, particularly

11

00:00:32,689 --> 00:00:34,310

back a few miles.

12

00:00:34,310 --> 00:00:44,830
And the experience of
the Bulge, many Germans

13
00:00:44,830 --> 00:00:47,320
who had been found
in American uniforms

14
00:00:47,320 --> 00:00:51,160
and speaking perfect English
and confusing the situation

15
00:00:51,160 --> 00:00:53,830
terribly, and were
responsible probably

16
00:00:53,830 --> 00:00:55,777
for many American deaths.

17
00:00:55,777 --> 00:00:58,360
Any rate, to make a long story
short, they wouldn't believe me

18
00:00:58,360 --> 00:01:00,460
and they asked me questions
over and over again,

19
00:01:00,460 --> 00:01:02,620
and they weren't
satisfied with that.

20
00:01:02,620 --> 00:01:05,560
So I said, well, take
me back to my captain

21
00:01:05,560 --> 00:01:06,780
and he'll identify me.

22
00:01:06,780 --> 00:01:13,030
Well, they did and Captain
[? Kirkabeau ?] identified me.

23
00:01:13,030 --> 00:01:17,860

The next morning, we kicked
off at around 4 or 5 o'clock

24
00:01:17,860 --> 00:01:22,900
in the morning in the darkness
without any pre-bombardment.

25
00:01:22,900 --> 00:01:24,520
No artillery, no nothing.

26
00:01:24,520 --> 00:01:25,780
Just quietly.

27
00:01:25,780 --> 00:01:31,150
No vehicles, no nothing toward
the Siegfried Line, the hill.

28
00:01:31,150 --> 00:01:35,530
And it was a terrible,
terrible experience

29
00:01:35,530 --> 00:01:39,100
because they had booby
trapped the entire side

30
00:01:39,100 --> 00:01:41,880
of the hill we were
walking up in the darkness.

31
00:01:41,880 --> 00:01:44,920
And the booby traps were
called bouncing Bettys.

32
00:01:44,920 --> 00:01:48,550
The bouncing Bettys,
when you tripped a wire,

33
00:01:48,550 --> 00:01:53,050
would bounce up about three
or four feet high and go off.

34
00:01:53,050 --> 00:01:56,050
And there were cries

of medic, medic, medic,

35

00:01:56,050 --> 00:01:57,370

and so on and so forth.

36

00:01:57,370 --> 00:02:01,270

And gradually, we
kept on going through.

37

00:02:01,270 --> 00:02:04,690

Miraculously, I didn't
trip any wires nice

38

00:02:04,690 --> 00:02:06,190

had no problem in that regard.

39

00:02:06,190 --> 00:02:11,400

And finally, we got to
the side of the hill

40

00:02:11,400 --> 00:02:14,580

that we were going to dig in on.

41

00:02:14,580 --> 00:02:18,000

And there were lots of prisoners
being sent back at that point

42

00:02:18,000 --> 00:02:23,140

to get to the rear,
just down the road,

43

00:02:23,140 --> 00:02:24,400

with their hands on head.

44

00:02:24,400 --> 00:02:27,430

Nobody had the time to
usher them or anything.

45

00:02:27,430 --> 00:02:32,710

And the Germans we found
there were particularly

46

00:02:32,710 --> 00:02:33,820
glad to be out of it.

47
00:02:33,820 --> 00:02:37,270
They weren't going
to make any trouble.

48
00:02:37,270 --> 00:02:42,280
They were wrecked pillboxes
on the Siegfried Line.

49
00:02:42,280 --> 00:02:44,710
They were wrecked
because the Air Force

50
00:02:44,710 --> 00:02:47,230
had bombed them repeatedly.

51
00:02:47,230 --> 00:02:53,060
And the company took
up a wrecked pillbox

52
00:02:53,060 --> 00:03:00,910
as its headquarters, and one
for medical cases, wounded.

53
00:03:00,910 --> 00:03:04,840
And we dug in, started to
dig in, and shale rock.

54
00:03:04,840 --> 00:03:07,450
And when dawn came,
there were still

55
00:03:07,450 --> 00:03:10,830
guys that weren't
anywhere near dug in

56
00:03:10,830 --> 00:03:15,880
yet because of the
hardness and shale,

57
00:03:15,880 --> 00:03:19,930

and it was cold and miserable.

58

00:03:19,930 --> 00:03:26,600

59

00:03:26,600 --> 00:03:28,730

The side of the
hill that we were on

60

00:03:28,730 --> 00:03:34,910

was a defilade position,
meaning that as you

61

00:03:34,910 --> 00:03:38,000

go to it toward the
top of the hill,

62

00:03:38,000 --> 00:03:41,030

you could see over the
surrounding countryside,

63

00:03:41,030 --> 00:03:43,550

but we were down and
back of that, which

64

00:03:43,550 --> 00:03:45,710

means a defilade position.

65

00:03:45,710 --> 00:03:50,770

And the 88s, most of them,
the 88 Our artillery--

66

00:03:50,770 --> 00:03:52,670

it was not artillery.

67

00:03:52,670 --> 00:03:59,180

It's a tank gun shells
used by the Germans--

68

00:03:59,180 --> 00:04:04,010

would mostly go over the top of
the hill and away, down back.

69

00:04:04,010 --> 00:04:07,700
But enough of them landed right
alongside side of the hill,

70

00:04:07,700 --> 00:04:11,450
there whereby we were
constantly getting bombarded,

71

00:04:11,450 --> 00:04:19,450
constantly having casualties.

72

00:04:19,450 --> 00:04:21,940
And the captain was
getting increasingly

73

00:04:21,940 --> 00:04:24,610
furious over not
having tank support

74

00:04:24,610 --> 00:04:27,340
or anything at that point.

75

00:04:27,340 --> 00:04:29,170
Radioed back, and
the tanks did not

76

00:04:29,170 --> 00:04:30,580
want to come up
because they were

77

00:04:30,580 --> 00:04:34,990
afraid of getting lambasted
with the German equivalent

78

00:04:34,990 --> 00:04:43,830
of the bazooka, which was a
very strong anti-tank shell.

79

00:04:43,830 --> 00:04:49,150
The bazooka looked like one of
those big musical instruments,

80

00:04:49,150 --> 00:04:54,910
a long, hollow tube, and it
rested on two men shoulders

81
00:04:54,910 --> 00:04:56,720
in order to fire.

82
00:04:56,720 --> 00:05:00,280
At any rate, Captain
[? Kirkabeau ?]

83
00:05:00,280 --> 00:05:02,170
was so angry that
he said that he

84
00:05:02,170 --> 00:05:07,750
was going to go back and fight
with the battalion headquarters

85
00:05:07,750 --> 00:05:09,940
over not having proper--

86
00:05:09,940 --> 00:05:11,950
this was after two or
three days, by the way,

87
00:05:11,950 --> 00:05:15,010
after two or three days
of taking constant mortar

88
00:05:15,010 --> 00:05:19,960
and fire, what we call
Screaming Mimi fire, which

89
00:05:19,960 --> 00:05:21,670
I keep motioning with my hands.

90
00:05:21,670 --> 00:05:23,140
I'm sorry.

91
00:05:23,140 --> 00:05:26,110
Screaming Mimi fire, which
is a particular rocket,

92
00:05:26,110 --> 00:05:30,370
which made a weird
sound as it came down.

93
00:05:30,370 --> 00:05:37,390
And General 88 and small
arms fire a machine gun fire,

94
00:05:37,390 --> 00:05:42,670
and Germans creeping on
their stomach up toward us.

95
00:05:42,670 --> 00:05:45,580
At any rate, he
told me to make sure

96
00:05:45,580 --> 00:05:49,480
that I got to all of the platoon
sergeants and lieutenants,

97
00:05:49,480 --> 00:05:50,940
and tell them--

98
00:05:50,940 --> 00:05:52,990
and he gave me
specific instructions

99
00:05:52,990 --> 00:05:55,540
to each one about what
they were supposed to do--

100
00:05:55,540 --> 00:06:02,920
and to tell them that he would
be back up later after fighting

101
00:06:02,920 --> 00:06:06,220
with the commander
of the battalion

102
00:06:06,220 --> 00:06:09,560
to get some tank support
and other support.

103
00:06:09,560 --> 00:06:14,160
So I started going
from hole to hole.

104
00:06:14,160 --> 00:06:20,670
I had reached the third
platoon hole with one

105
00:06:20,670 --> 00:06:28,920
to go when a mortar fire
came in and small arms fire

106
00:06:28,920 --> 00:06:31,470
at the same time.

107
00:06:31,470 --> 00:06:33,600
And I jumped into
the hole, practically

108
00:06:33,600 --> 00:06:37,020
breaking the leg of a
sergeant that was in there,

109
00:06:37,020 --> 00:06:42,660
and started telling him
about the instructions.

110
00:06:42,660 --> 00:06:45,240
It was daylight at that point.

111
00:06:45,240 --> 00:06:46,740
And he turned me
around and he said,

112
00:06:46,740 --> 00:06:49,320
you've got blood on the
back of your jacket.

113
00:06:49,320 --> 00:06:51,720
I said, well, I
don't feel anything.

114

00:06:51,720 --> 00:06:52,915

He said, well, let me look.

115

00:06:52,915 --> 00:06:54,540

And he looked and he
said, well, you've

116

00:06:54,540 --> 00:06:58,410

got some sort of a
penetrating wound there.

117

00:06:58,410 --> 00:07:04,545

And he said you've, got shrapnel
bits over parts of your skin,

118

00:07:04,545 --> 00:07:05,670

which I didn't feel either.

119

00:07:05,670 --> 00:07:08,850

120

00:07:08,850 --> 00:07:11,940

So he said, well, you better
go to the aid station, which

121

00:07:11,940 --> 00:07:16,530

is the wrecked pillbox
about 50 yards over there.

122

00:07:16,530 --> 00:07:20,490

So I said, OK, I will, but I
got to get this fourth message

123

00:07:20,490 --> 00:07:25,950

to the last platoon
and it's on the way.

124

00:07:25,950 --> 00:07:26,690

Oh, no problem.

125

00:07:26,690 --> 00:07:27,357

It's on the way.

126
00:07:27,357 --> 00:07:31,170
So I did it, got to finally
reach the aid station.

127
00:07:31,170 --> 00:07:34,260
The aid station had
a Jeep coming up

128
00:07:34,260 --> 00:07:38,820
with two other guys in it,
and they stuck me on the back

129
00:07:38,820 --> 00:07:44,460
and they took off
for a rear town,

130
00:07:44,460 --> 00:07:46,750
where I got hot
food and everything.

131
00:07:46,750 --> 00:07:49,230
It was great again.

132
00:07:49,230 --> 00:07:51,270
The doctor said
something about-- well,

133
00:07:51,270 --> 00:07:52,990
he said it's a
penetrating wound,

134
00:07:52,990 --> 00:07:55,830
but we don't want to
take any chances with it.

135
00:07:55,830 --> 00:07:59,130
And they picked out some
of the shrapnel bits that

136
00:07:59,130 --> 00:08:03,100
were here and there, and
it was no big deal at all.

137
00:08:03,100 --> 00:08:08,160
And I found out later
that the sergeant

138
00:08:08,160 --> 00:08:11,040
I'd been talking to
in the third platoon

139
00:08:11,040 --> 00:08:16,080
had put me for the Silver
Star with the words,

140
00:08:16,080 --> 00:08:19,190
"without regard for"--

141
00:08:19,190 --> 00:08:22,020
I'm laughing here, not crying--

142
00:08:22,020 --> 00:08:25,230
"without regard for my
life," et cetera, et cetera.

143
00:08:25,230 --> 00:08:29,190
I did this, that, and the
other thing, which I candidly

144
00:08:29,190 --> 00:08:32,690
say was not really true.

145
00:08:32,690 --> 00:08:36,169
I felt a little bit better
when the awards committee--

146
00:08:36,169 --> 00:08:39,590
I found out later, when
we were in Australia

147
00:08:39,590 --> 00:08:41,600
at the end of the war,
the awards committee

148

00:08:41,600 --> 00:08:46,560
felt that they had not enough--

149
00:08:46,560 --> 00:08:48,240
what do you call it?

150
00:08:48,240 --> 00:08:48,900
Corroboration.

151
00:08:48,900 --> 00:08:51,590
Corroboration is
exactly the right word.

152
00:08:51,590 --> 00:08:54,840
Corroboration, so they knocked
it down to a Bronze Star,

153
00:08:54,840 --> 00:08:57,120
and I was happy anyway.

154
00:08:57,120 --> 00:09:01,770
So I was off the
line for seven weeks.

155
00:09:01,770 --> 00:09:05,320
And when I came
back, the division,

156
00:09:05,320 --> 00:09:10,170
our battalion, anyway, was
in the German city of Worms.

157
00:09:10,170 --> 00:09:15,840
Worms, W-O-R-M-S, on the Rhine.

158
00:09:15,840 --> 00:09:19,530
And we stayed there
two or three days

159
00:09:19,530 --> 00:09:23,187
and then kicked off again
for Frankfurt, Darmstadt,

160

00:09:23,187 --> 00:09:23,895
and other points.

161

00:09:23,895 --> 00:09:26,760

162

00:09:26,760 --> 00:09:29,220
At that point, it
became a different war.

163

00:09:29,220 --> 00:09:32,310
It was not a
question of slogging

164

00:09:32,310 --> 00:09:38,970
horrible, horrible battles,
in which it was practically--

165

00:09:38,970 --> 00:09:42,300
I never experienced man to
man fighting, thank God,

166

00:09:42,300 --> 00:09:45,660
but it was the closest thing
to that, where you actually

167

00:09:45,660 --> 00:09:49,190
saw the Germans and you
were getting fired on,

168

00:09:49,190 --> 00:09:51,750
and it was really wicked.

169

00:09:51,750 --> 00:09:54,480
Now it became a question of
getting out on the highway

170

00:09:54,480 --> 00:09:59,040
and stopping and having
a run and gun fight

171

00:09:59,040 --> 00:10:00,810

and getting shells,
and so forth,

172
00:10:00,810 --> 00:10:05,070
but you weren't holed up for
three or four days in a row

173
00:10:05,070 --> 00:10:07,630
in miserable weather,
and things like that.

174
00:10:07,630 --> 00:10:11,960

175
00:10:11,960 --> 00:10:17,500
We went up, as I remember, to
Erfurt, Gotha, those cities,

176
00:10:17,500 --> 00:10:20,130
in the northern part
of just above Bavaria.

177
00:10:20,130 --> 00:10:24,780

178
00:10:24,780 --> 00:10:28,120
And all of a sudden, we
had some opposition there

179
00:10:28,120 --> 00:10:30,300
in each one of those places.

180
00:10:30,300 --> 00:10:34,380
And then we turned
quickly down a little bit

181
00:10:34,380 --> 00:10:38,910
over toward the Czech
border, and then

182
00:10:38,910 --> 00:10:42,340
down to Graff and
[? Mor, ?] and so forth,

183
00:10:42,340 --> 00:10:49,270
and ultimately
Passau, German city,

184
00:10:49,270 --> 00:10:50,490
before we went into Austria.

185
00:10:50,490 --> 00:10:54,290

186
00:10:54,290 --> 00:10:56,860
The fear was always great.

187
00:10:56,860 --> 00:11:01,410
We had problems at night
of counter attacks.

188
00:11:01,410 --> 00:11:04,540
We were counterattacked
in Oberhof

189
00:11:04,540 --> 00:11:09,020
and in the [? Thoringenvald. ?]
And the counterattacks

190
00:11:09,020 --> 00:11:11,890
are fearful because you never
know where they're coming from

191
00:11:11,890 --> 00:11:15,910
or never know in
what way they, what

192
00:11:15,910 --> 00:11:19,500
form they're going to take.

193
00:11:19,500 --> 00:11:24,070
And I had an
experience in Oberhof,

194
00:11:24,070 --> 00:11:30,470

not only the experience
of my guide mentor,

195
00:11:30,470 --> 00:11:33,280
John Doles, tapping
me on the heel

196
00:11:33,280 --> 00:11:38,490
and helping me come through it.

197
00:11:38,490 --> 00:11:44,620
But we were there two days,
and on the second morning,

198
00:11:44,620 --> 00:11:47,140
I heard from the--

199
00:11:47,140 --> 00:11:50,720
most of our squads were all
around the town, ringing

200
00:11:50,720 --> 00:11:52,960
in the town,
protecting the tanks,

201
00:11:52,960 --> 00:11:56,200
protecting against
counterattacks.

202
00:11:56,200 --> 00:11:59,440
The captain and I were
holed up in a house, where

203
00:11:59,440 --> 00:12:05,710
we heard about a house nearby
where 30 or 40 German kids had

204
00:12:05,710 --> 00:12:09,940
been sent to get them
away from the Ruhr

205
00:12:09,940 --> 00:12:13,630
and other bombing

centers, Dresden and Ruhr,

206

00:12:13,630 --> 00:12:15,670

places like that.

207

00:12:15,670 --> 00:12:16,570

Just like in England.

208

00:12:16,570 --> 00:12:21,440

They sent the English kids
to places in the country.

209

00:12:21,440 --> 00:12:24,520

And so it seemed logical.

210

00:12:24,520 --> 00:12:27,880

The captain supported the
idea of filling my helmet

211

00:12:27,880 --> 00:12:31,750

with C-rations, chocolate,
things like that.

212

00:12:31,750 --> 00:12:33,580

And I went over and
knocked on the door,

213

00:12:33,580 --> 00:12:41,560

and this very hostile,
stiff, young lady answered.

214

00:12:41,560 --> 00:12:43,720

And I told her who I was.

215

00:12:43,720 --> 00:12:48,730

She was like a
governess to this group.

216

00:12:48,730 --> 00:12:52,060

And she said, come in.

217

00:12:52,060 --> 00:12:56,560

So I went in, dumped the
chocolate on the table.

218
00:12:56,560 --> 00:13:00,190
And the kids were brought in
and they all stood around,

219
00:13:00,190 --> 00:13:03,100
and she said something
to them, a signal.

220
00:13:03,100 --> 00:13:07,650
And they all said, Heil Hitler,
with their hands raised.

221
00:13:07,650 --> 00:13:09,422
And I just turned
and walked out,

222
00:13:09,422 --> 00:13:10,630
and that was the end of that.

223
00:13:10,630 --> 00:13:13,810

224
00:13:13,810 --> 00:13:17,422
So there was still
feeling on their part,

225
00:13:17,422 --> 00:13:18,880
on some of their
part, particularly

226
00:13:18,880 --> 00:13:20,560
some of the younger people.

227
00:13:20,560 --> 00:13:27,520

228
00:13:27,520 --> 00:13:34,132
We went into a town
north of Passau,

229

00:13:34,132 --> 00:13:39,930

where the captain and I and
the driver and the big radio

230

00:13:39,930 --> 00:13:46,280

operator, Lucas
Sevich, were billeted.

231

00:13:46,280 --> 00:13:52,050

And usually, we were told,
in no uncertain terms,

232

00:13:52,050 --> 00:13:54,630

to kick the people
out regardless.

233

00:13:54,630 --> 00:13:55,800

Just get rid of them.

234

00:13:55,800 --> 00:13:59,100

No civilians in
the house with you.

235

00:13:59,100 --> 00:14:04,800

But there were five
or six young women,

236

00:14:04,800 --> 00:14:12,090

who later it came out that
they were either the wives

237

00:14:12,090 --> 00:14:19,260

or mistresses of SS officers,
high ranking SS officers,

238

00:14:19,260 --> 00:14:23,730

who had been brought
down from northern areas.

239

00:14:23,730 --> 00:14:27,030

And one of them was
a Dutch young woman,

240

00:14:27,030 --> 00:14:28,740
beautiful, absolutely gorgeous.

241

00:14:28,740 --> 00:14:32,530

242

00:14:32,530 --> 00:14:35,380
So the captain said, well,
they can sleep in the attic.

243

00:14:35,380 --> 00:14:40,280

244

00:14:40,280 --> 00:14:43,100
So then we made up
plans for guard duty,

245

00:14:43,100 --> 00:14:45,665
and I had the first
shift of two hours.

246

00:14:45,665 --> 00:14:48,170

247

00:14:48,170 --> 00:14:50,030
By then it was about midnight.

248

00:14:50,030 --> 00:14:52,490
Two hours, 12:00 to 2:00.

249

00:14:52,490 --> 00:14:55,510
And I'm on guard duty and
everyone else is sleeping.

250

00:14:55,510 --> 00:15:01,070
And the Dutch girl tiptoes
downstairs and tries

251

00:15:01,070 --> 00:15:04,490
to inveigled me to come up.

252

00:15:04,490 --> 00:15:06,650
And I am absolutely--

253
00:15:06,650 --> 00:15:10,030
I tell this anecdote
to show the fear

254
00:15:10,030 --> 00:15:15,950
and frozen this that
you can go through.

255
00:15:15,950 --> 00:15:18,890
Even if I had been
willing to, I wouldn't

256
00:15:18,890 --> 00:15:21,790
have been capable of even
making love with her or anything

257
00:15:21,790 --> 00:15:25,290
by having sex, and I just
dismissed her and told her

258
00:15:25,290 --> 00:15:26,705
to get her neck back upstairs.

259
00:15:26,705 --> 00:15:30,480

260
00:15:30,480 --> 00:15:32,190
Then we went down to Passau.

261
00:15:32,190 --> 00:15:36,270
And by then, all
along the road, we

262
00:15:36,270 --> 00:15:43,010
were getting signs
of the Holocaust.

263
00:15:43,010 --> 00:15:51,030
We were getting stripen
clad people on the road,

264

00:15:51,030 --> 00:15:55,920

begging, climbing all over the
half-track, looking for food.

265

00:15:55,920 --> 00:15:59,240

We gave them what we had,
which, as I said before,

266

00:15:59,240 --> 00:16:06,077

was not a good idea because
of their real needs.

267

00:16:06,077 --> 00:16:08,160

You have to be careful,
of course, with people who

268

00:16:08,160 --> 00:16:10,080

have been starved or something.

269

00:16:10,080 --> 00:16:14,550

But these people were
not starved like the ones

270

00:16:14,550 --> 00:16:15,900

in the concentration camp.

271

00:16:15,900 --> 00:16:19,650

These were ones who
were real work camps.

272

00:16:19,650 --> 00:16:23,490

They were generally healthier,
but just plain hungry

273

00:16:23,490 --> 00:16:30,740

because they had flowed
out of their camps

274

00:16:30,740 --> 00:16:32,710

with the coming
of the Americans,

275

00:16:32,710 --> 00:16:35,870

and the SS were starting to
save their skins and leave.

276

00:16:35,870 --> 00:16:38,910

277

00:16:38,910 --> 00:16:40,650

It got worse and
worse and worse.

278

00:16:40,650 --> 00:16:43,680

I mean, more and more
were on the road,

279

00:16:43,680 --> 00:16:47,220

and orders came that we would
not, under any circumstances,

280

00:16:47,220 --> 00:16:50,090

let them come in the track.

281

00:16:50,090 --> 00:16:53,880

We were not to give them
food because there already

282

00:16:53,880 --> 00:16:59,240

had been word passed back
to echelons to bring up

283

00:16:59,240 --> 00:17:04,745

extra kitchens and
bring our best nurses.

284

00:17:04,745 --> 00:17:20,609

285

00:17:20,609 --> 00:17:26,520

I've got to say, and I'll
say this later again,

286

00:17:26,520 --> 00:17:31,430

as a group, the most
magnificent group I came across,

287

00:17:31,430 --> 00:17:34,693
if you've got it categorized by
group and make generalizations,

288

00:17:34,693 --> 00:17:35,735
were the American nurses.

289

00:17:35,735 --> 00:17:58,390

290

00:17:58,390 --> 00:18:04,100
Several miles west
of Mauthausen,

291

00:18:04,100 --> 00:18:08,290
somewhere in between
Passau and Mauthausen,

292

00:18:08,290 --> 00:18:14,320
word came by radio that
Mauthausen existed.

293

00:18:14,320 --> 00:18:17,110
They described what
they could of the camp,

294

00:18:17,110 --> 00:18:19,120
that is, many,
many, many thousands

295

00:18:19,120 --> 00:18:23,020
were in there they
knew and it had

296

00:18:23,020 --> 00:18:27,055
the reputation of being one of
the three worst death camps.

297

00:18:27,055 --> 00:18:30,770

298
00:18:30,770 --> 00:18:34,590
The 41st cavalry and
reconnaissance groups

299
00:18:34,590 --> 00:18:42,260
in our division, with some
moving armored vehicles

300
00:18:42,260 --> 00:18:44,510
and the usual Jeeps
and everything,

301
00:18:44,510 --> 00:18:50,030
had come across
some SS men leaving.

302
00:18:50,030 --> 00:18:52,310
Saw them a few miles away.

303
00:18:52,310 --> 00:18:55,400
They engaged in a
running gunfight,

304
00:18:55,400 --> 00:19:00,120
and they took
loads of prisoners.

305
00:19:00,120 --> 00:19:04,990
The prisoners were
sent back in some way.

306
00:19:04,990 --> 00:19:06,670
I forget how they
were dealt with.

307
00:19:06,670 --> 00:19:08,470
At any rate, the
reconnaissance wanted

308
00:19:08,470 --> 00:19:10,750
to make sure that we
understood that the camp was

309

00:19:10,750 --> 00:19:15,280
there exactly where it was,
and the fact that the SS seemed

310

00:19:15,280 --> 00:19:17,710
to have left.

311

00:19:17,710 --> 00:19:19,480
We got the word
because, again, we're

312

00:19:19,480 --> 00:19:21,445
point of the whole division.

313

00:19:21,445 --> 00:19:24,350

314

00:19:24,350 --> 00:19:27,270
And I don't know why
our battalion was

315

00:19:27,270 --> 00:19:30,525
the point of the whole
division so much, but it was.

316

00:19:30,525 --> 00:19:34,175

317

00:19:34,175 --> 00:19:45,790
We were told to regroup down
the road a ways from Mauthausen

318

00:19:45,790 --> 00:19:50,070
and make a military
presence, and go in there

319

00:19:50,070 --> 00:19:51,150
and restore order.

320

00:19:51,150 --> 00:19:54,230

321
00:19:54,230 --> 00:19:56,703
The 41st cavalry, and others
up there on the scene,

322
00:19:56,703 --> 00:19:58,370
had said that they
couldn't do anything.

323
00:19:58,370 --> 00:20:00,290
They weren't equipped to do it.

324
00:20:00,290 --> 00:20:04,820
And all they could do was
go on and protect the area

325
00:20:04,820 --> 00:20:06,920
like reconnaissance,
reconnoiter,

326
00:20:06,920 --> 00:20:08,630
like they'd been doing.

327
00:20:08,630 --> 00:20:12,800
So our job was to go up there
and bring order and bring those

328
00:20:12,800 --> 00:20:17,110
who had been spilled out from
the camp back into the camp,

329
00:20:17,110 --> 00:20:18,575
release the immediate environs.

330
00:20:18,575 --> 00:20:22,670

331
00:20:22,670 --> 00:20:27,260
So we did it, and
there was three tanks

332
00:20:27,260 --> 00:20:28,640

in front of the half-tracks.

333

00:20:28,640 --> 00:20:34,090

334

00:20:34,090 --> 00:20:34,980

OK, we're back.

335

00:20:34,980 --> 00:20:38,480

We had a brief interruption
when someone came to your door.

336

00:20:38,480 --> 00:20:43,050

You were talking about the three
tanks in front of a half-track

337

00:20:43,050 --> 00:20:47,010

and then the door stopped.

338

00:20:47,010 --> 00:20:53,640

When the division got word of
the presence of Mauthausen,

339

00:20:53,640 --> 00:20:59,010

the orders were being given
us by radio from battalion.

340

00:20:59,010 --> 00:21:02,460

341

00:21:02,460 --> 00:21:05,590

The tracks and tanks
behind us were all

342

00:21:05,590 --> 00:21:11,100

stopped along the road,
and Captain [? Kirkabeau ?]

343

00:21:11,100 --> 00:21:12,810

made sure that
two or three tanks

344

00:21:12,810 --> 00:21:19,260
came up ahead of the half-tracks
and that all of the men

345
00:21:19,260 --> 00:21:21,780
dismounted from the tracks.

346
00:21:21,780 --> 00:21:26,880
And they were ordered
to march up to the camp,

347
00:21:26,880 --> 00:21:30,030
holding their
rifles at port arms,

348
00:21:30,030 --> 00:21:33,150
to make sure that
everyone understood

349
00:21:33,150 --> 00:21:39,030
that it was a military situation
and that the Russian explosion

350
00:21:39,030 --> 00:21:44,550
in the camp, which we had
heard about, was to be quelled.

351
00:21:44,550 --> 00:21:47,640
In other words, the Russian
prisoners in the camp

352
00:21:47,640 --> 00:21:50,460
were taking over things
and then exploding

353
00:21:50,460 --> 00:21:53,320
and being authoritarian,
et cetera, et cetera.

354
00:21:53,320 --> 00:21:56,850
So all these considerations,
plus the possibility

355

00:21:56,850 --> 00:22:01,290
that there were some SS or
other guards left behind,

356
00:22:01,290 --> 00:22:04,350
had to be planned
for and dealt with.

357
00:22:04,350 --> 00:22:07,080
I want to skip this
for one second.

358
00:22:07,080 --> 00:22:09,900
I go back to tell about
something that happened

359
00:22:09,900 --> 00:22:12,660
between Passau and Mauthausen.

360
00:22:12,660 --> 00:22:17,640
The captain and I were holed up
in a house with no other person

361
00:22:17,640 --> 00:22:18,240
present.

362
00:22:18,240 --> 00:22:21,840
The driver was taking care
of his half-tracks in place,

363
00:22:21,840 --> 00:22:23,140
and so on and so forth.

364
00:22:23,140 --> 00:22:26,730
Well, we were alone, and a
knock came at the door, one

365
00:22:26,730 --> 00:22:28,260
that we least expected.

366
00:22:28,260 --> 00:22:31,980
Because although we had a
firefight the day before,

367
00:22:31,980 --> 00:22:36,060
we did not dream that there
was anyone, any of the enemy,

368
00:22:36,060 --> 00:22:39,360
within two or three
miles at least.

369
00:22:39,360 --> 00:22:42,180
It turned out to be
a middle ranking SS

370
00:22:42,180 --> 00:22:44,670
officer and his aide.

371
00:22:44,670 --> 00:22:51,660
And the aide said that
the SS officer had

372
00:22:51,660 --> 00:22:56,010
the tattered remains of an
SS division out in the woods

373
00:22:56,010 --> 00:23:00,930
and they wanted to
surrender to the Americans.

374
00:23:00,930 --> 00:23:04,260
We knew from radio
reports that the Russians

375
00:23:04,260 --> 00:23:09,090
were coming some
miles to the east

376
00:23:09,090 --> 00:23:11,310
and that they weren't far away.

377
00:23:11,310 --> 00:23:14,570
And we knew, putting
two and two together,

378

00:23:14,570 --> 00:23:16,680

that the SS divisions
and others were

379

00:23:16,680 --> 00:23:22,140

being squeezed in the middle and
they wanted to surrender to us.

380

00:23:22,140 --> 00:23:24,480

The captain said, OK, surrender.

381

00:23:24,480 --> 00:23:28,410

And the man said, the middle
ranking German officer

382

00:23:28,410 --> 00:23:32,460

said, very stiffly, that
under no circumstances

383

00:23:32,460 --> 00:23:37,830

could he surrender to an
American officer of less

384

00:23:37,830 --> 00:23:40,980

than equivalent
or superior rank.

385

00:23:40,980 --> 00:23:46,110

And the captain struck
him very hard in the face

386

00:23:46,110 --> 00:23:50,040

and knocked him
down and told him

387

00:23:50,040 --> 00:23:56,100

to get his ass back to the
woods where his men were.

388

00:23:56,100 --> 00:23:58,500

We found out later
that probably they had

389

00:23:58,500 --> 00:24:01,200
been picked up by the Russians.

390

00:24:01,200 --> 00:24:05,850
Going on ahead to
the military presence

391

00:24:05,850 --> 00:24:09,630
that we were asked to give,
going into Mauthausen,

392

00:24:09,630 --> 00:24:15,330
the men walked in
military formation

393

00:24:15,330 --> 00:24:17,010
up the road to Mauthausen.

394

00:24:17,010 --> 00:24:21,030
The captain and I jumped
on the first tank.

395

00:24:21,030 --> 00:24:23,370
He asked me to join him.

396

00:24:23,370 --> 00:24:26,490
And we had been used to
sitting on moving tanks anyway,

397

00:24:26,490 --> 00:24:28,860
going through the
forests of Belgium,

398

00:24:28,860 --> 00:24:29,850
and so on and so forth.

399

00:24:29,850 --> 00:24:34,810

400

00:24:34,810 --> 00:24:41,020
When we reached the
general area of the camp,

401
00:24:41,020 --> 00:24:45,340
we saw that the situation was
rather almost hopeless, as far

402
00:24:45,340 --> 00:24:48,070
as restoring immediate
order, because so many

403
00:24:48,070 --> 00:24:50,530
had burst out of the camp.

404
00:24:50,530 --> 00:24:52,680
They were all over the place.

405
00:24:52,680 --> 00:25:00,400
And we saw dozens and dozens
of badly clad individuals

406
00:25:00,400 --> 00:25:05,560
with these striped uniforms,
et cetera, stumbling about.

407
00:25:05,560 --> 00:25:10,270
We saw them dying, dying
on the road actually.

408
00:25:10,270 --> 00:25:16,490
And the gates were already
opened, the big swastika

409
00:25:16,490 --> 00:25:25,680
above the gate, big
soaring gate, and everybody

410
00:25:25,680 --> 00:25:28,750
clustered around us.

411
00:25:28,750 --> 00:25:32,250
And the captain
tried to make sure

412

00:25:32,250 --> 00:25:35,810
that they understood
that they were

413
00:25:35,810 --> 00:25:39,620
to back off and give us room.

414
00:25:39,620 --> 00:25:45,670
And he singled out somebody that
clearly spoke English and asked

415
00:25:45,670 --> 00:25:53,170
him to relay orders that we
were there to help them only.

416
00:25:53,170 --> 00:25:55,030
We were there to help them only.

417
00:25:55,030 --> 00:25:59,320
This was stressed
over and over again.

418
00:25:59,320 --> 00:26:03,990
The captain gave orders to the
one lieutenant that was left,

419
00:26:03,990 --> 00:26:08,810
and the platoon sergeants,
as to what they were to do.

420
00:26:08,810 --> 00:26:11,440
And he said, come with me,
and we took off running.

421
00:26:11,440 --> 00:26:14,240

422
00:26:14,240 --> 00:26:19,370
He led the way through every
single cubicle and space

423
00:26:19,370 --> 00:26:20,690
around there.

424
00:26:20,690 --> 00:26:27,230
We went first to the oven,
and the oven door was open,

425
00:26:27,230 --> 00:26:30,770
and the bodies were
like cordwood inside.

426
00:26:30,770 --> 00:26:37,970

427
00:26:37,970 --> 00:26:42,290
We went to a woman's sick
ward, to a men's ward,

428
00:26:42,290 --> 00:26:47,630
where they smiled weakly at
us from bunks, and waved.

429
00:26:47,630 --> 00:26:50,360
Some of them waved.

430
00:26:50,360 --> 00:26:54,800
We went out into
the main enclosure

431
00:26:54,800 --> 00:26:57,910
and began listening to people.

432
00:26:57,910 --> 00:27:00,140
And the captain wanted
to see some more,

433
00:27:00,140 --> 00:27:05,290
so he asked an
English-speaking person

434
00:27:05,290 --> 00:27:08,470
what else he should
immediately see in order

435

00:27:08,470 --> 00:27:11,110
to get a grasp of what
the camp was like.

436
00:27:11,110 --> 00:27:16,410
And the English-speaking
person said, I'll take you.

437
00:27:16,410 --> 00:27:19,570
And I don't recall what
it was after the men's

438
00:27:19,570 --> 00:27:22,720
ward and the woman's sick
ward, the general sleeping

439
00:27:22,720 --> 00:27:26,450
ward, and the eating places.

440
00:27:26,450 --> 00:27:28,520
High smells everywhere.

441
00:27:28,520 --> 00:27:31,735
I mean, the odors were
absolutely terrific.

442
00:27:31,735 --> 00:27:35,500
It was what I had
come to recognize,

443
00:27:35,500 --> 00:27:37,540
going through Europe,
as the smell of death.

444
00:27:37,540 --> 00:27:42,040
Even though that was a
figment of my imagination,

445
00:27:42,040 --> 00:27:45,940
because although death
was where I was in Europe,

446
00:27:45,940 --> 00:27:48,130

the smells only
became associated

447
00:27:48,130 --> 00:27:51,250
with the smell of death
because they were there also.

448
00:27:51,250 --> 00:27:55,960
For example, the gunfire, the
smoke from burning buildings,

449
00:27:55,960 --> 00:27:57,670
these things.

450
00:27:57,670 --> 00:28:01,328
At any rate, we kept
on running around,

451
00:28:01,328 --> 00:28:02,620
running around, running around.

452
00:28:02,620 --> 00:28:08,470
The captain was the
most inquisitive person

453
00:28:08,470 --> 00:28:13,570
that I had found anywhere
in my company or division.

454
00:28:13,570 --> 00:28:16,540
He wanted to know,
and he wanted to

455
00:28:16,540 --> 00:28:20,660
with a great feeling of
empathy, because he cried.

456
00:28:20,660 --> 00:28:27,380

457
00:28:27,380 --> 00:28:29,510
The reason I am taken
by surprise by this

458
00:28:29,510 --> 00:28:34,750
is because he was a guy with
no education, particularly, who

459
00:28:34,750 --> 00:28:39,185
would come up the hard
way in the Army Command.

460
00:28:39,185 --> 00:28:47,990
But he was a very neat guy.

461
00:28:47,990 --> 00:28:52,790

462
00:28:52,790 --> 00:28:56,820
When this two-hour
period was over--

463
00:28:56,820 --> 00:29:00,360
I say two hours because some
of it's blank in my mind.

464
00:29:00,360 --> 00:29:03,030
I don't remember everything.

465
00:29:03,030 --> 00:29:03,960
I really don't.

466
00:29:03,960 --> 00:29:11,250
I was absolutely so stunned that
I can remember the highlights

467
00:29:11,250 --> 00:29:13,320
and that's all.

468
00:29:13,320 --> 00:29:20,130
I do recall that he was
bellowing into a radio

469
00:29:20,130 --> 00:29:23,970
when a half-track came

up with a command radio,

470

00:29:23,970 --> 00:29:28,530

bellowing about making
sure that enough

471

00:29:28,530 --> 00:29:33,880

kitchens in the area and
medical groups in the area.

472

00:29:33,880 --> 00:29:37,240

But he had been assured
already that this

473

00:29:37,240 --> 00:29:41,830

had been put in process,
but he wanted to make sure.

474

00:29:41,830 --> 00:29:47,080

And he suggested to me that
I go down into the town.

475

00:29:47,080 --> 00:29:52,540

Oh, OK, a very important step.

476

00:29:52,540 --> 00:29:57,910

He gathered, quickly, a couple
of the technical sergeants

477

00:29:57,910 --> 00:30:04,110

of platoons and asked
them to get up a group,

478

00:30:04,110 --> 00:30:08,850

picking from each patrol,
to go into the town

479

00:30:08,850 --> 00:30:18,480

with rifles and bayonets fixed
and order all healthy civilians

480

00:30:18,480 --> 00:30:23,190

to come up with shovels

and other equipment

481
00:30:23,190 --> 00:30:24,660
of that nature--

482
00:30:24,660 --> 00:30:29,280
spades, shovels,
pitchforks, et cetera.

483
00:30:29,280 --> 00:30:33,420
The idea was to show,
first of all, everyone

484
00:30:33,420 --> 00:30:37,120
in the town what had
taken place next to them,

485
00:30:37,120 --> 00:30:39,890
if they did not know it.

486
00:30:39,890 --> 00:30:42,130
Most of them did.

487
00:30:42,130 --> 00:30:44,870
The other thing was
to get some work done

488
00:30:44,870 --> 00:30:49,680
because bodies had to be
buried, et cetera, et cetera.

489
00:30:49,680 --> 00:30:58,700
He immediately started them
on a vast, vast burial spot

490
00:30:58,700 --> 00:31:00,800
out on the grounds.

491
00:31:00,800 --> 00:31:03,050
By this time,
battalion had come up.

492

00:31:03,050 --> 00:31:06,040

Battalion approved
of what he was doing.

493

00:31:06,040 --> 00:31:10,130

As a matter of fact,
they emphasized it.

494

00:31:10,130 --> 00:31:13,670

And more people were
brought up from the town,

495

00:31:13,670 --> 00:31:21,290

able-bodied people, women, older
children, men on up to age 80

496

00:31:21,290 --> 00:31:25,610

or 90, et cetera.

497

00:31:25,610 --> 00:31:28,000

Some of them, of
course, showing their--

498

00:31:28,000 --> 00:31:31,970

499

00:31:31,970 --> 00:31:33,370

Let me just stop the tape.

500

00:31:33,370 --> 00:31:34,950

I'm out right now.

501

00:31:34,950 --> 00:31:35,970

[INAUDIBLE]

502

00:31:35,970 --> 00:31:36,470

Yeah.

503

00:31:36,470 --> 00:31:42,560

504

00:31:42,560 --> 00:31:44,810

This is a continuation of
the United States Holocaust

505
00:31:44,810 --> 00:31:46,460
Memorial Museum
Volunteer Collection

506
00:31:46,460 --> 00:31:47,710
interview with George Leonard.

507
00:31:47,710 --> 00:31:49,580
This is tape 2,
side B. And you were

508
00:31:49,580 --> 00:31:54,170
talking about bringing
civilians in for the burials,

509
00:31:54,170 --> 00:31:58,010
and I would like you to please
continue along those lines.

510
00:31:58,010 --> 00:32:04,730

511
00:32:04,730 --> 00:32:09,250
The captain suggested to me
that I go down into the town

512
00:32:09,250 --> 00:32:12,210
and find billets for them.

513
00:32:12,210 --> 00:32:15,538

514
00:32:15,538 --> 00:32:19,930
And another matter he wanted
to take care of was they had--

515
00:32:19,930 --> 00:32:21,280
this was later in the day.

516

00:32:21,280 --> 00:32:22,720
I'm skipping ahead a little bit.

517
00:32:22,720 --> 00:32:25,210
Later in the day, they
found out that there

518
00:32:25,210 --> 00:32:29,680
were what was being
called werewolves,

519
00:32:29,680 --> 00:32:35,200
which Nazi fanatics were up
in the hills making trouble.

520
00:32:35,200 --> 00:32:37,180
And it came to light,
I guess, during the day

521
00:32:37,180 --> 00:32:41,270
because some stray shots had
come into the town, snipers.

522
00:32:41,270 --> 00:32:43,780

523
00:32:43,780 --> 00:32:50,350
So another duty, another
task he wanted to accomplish

524
00:32:50,350 --> 00:32:56,570
was to get a group to go up
and dig them out, which he did.

525
00:32:56,570 --> 00:33:00,270

526
00:33:00,270 --> 00:33:04,270
My part in that was simply
to get some of the guys

527
00:33:04,270 --> 00:33:06,060
to agree to go up.

528
00:33:06,060 --> 00:33:08,700

529
00:33:08,700 --> 00:33:11,670
No matter how horrible
the war had been for us,

530
00:33:11,670 --> 00:33:16,800
you always get some who are
willing to take on more.

531
00:33:16,800 --> 00:33:20,040
Not through some sort
of a selflessness,

532
00:33:20,040 --> 00:33:23,910
but because it was their nature.

533
00:33:23,910 --> 00:33:25,800
They were needed for
this job, and they did

534
00:33:25,800 --> 00:33:28,950
a good job of digging them out.

535
00:33:28,950 --> 00:33:31,830
Within days, there
were no problems

536
00:33:31,830 --> 00:33:36,450
of outside interference
from werewolves.

537
00:33:36,450 --> 00:33:38,640
I went down into the town.

538
00:33:38,640 --> 00:33:44,430
There was a street,
a dead ending,

539
00:33:44,430 --> 00:33:51,880

at the bottom of the slight
hill, which we could clearly

540
00:33:51,880 --> 00:33:54,850
see from the
grounds of the camp.

541
00:33:54,850 --> 00:33:57,355
And I went to that street--

542
00:33:57,355 --> 00:34:00,910

543
00:34:00,910 --> 00:34:03,310
I'm going to skip ahead
to getting a house first

544
00:34:03,310 --> 00:34:05,470
before I go to the first house.

545
00:34:05,470 --> 00:34:07,405
I got a house for
us, the third house.

546
00:34:07,405 --> 00:34:11,770
It was a dentist and his
family who lived there,

547
00:34:11,770 --> 00:34:13,629
and I told him to get out fast.

548
00:34:13,629 --> 00:34:17,030

549
00:34:17,030 --> 00:34:22,150
And then I went to
the first house--

550
00:34:22,150 --> 00:34:24,550
I'd gone there first, actually--

551
00:34:24,550 --> 00:34:29,429

to discover that five
young ladies were in it,

552
00:34:29,429 --> 00:34:36,810
and they were obviously
camp prisoners, inmates,

553
00:34:36,810 --> 00:34:40,190
who had broken out
early in the game,

554
00:34:40,190 --> 00:34:44,090
probably when the SS
officers first left.

555
00:34:44,090 --> 00:34:48,230
And they had taken over a house
that some of the SS officers

556
00:34:48,230 --> 00:34:50,449
had lived in with
their families,

557
00:34:50,449 --> 00:34:53,410
for one family or two,
I'm not sure what.

558
00:34:53,410 --> 00:34:57,940
At any rate, the five
girls consisted of,

559
00:34:57,940 --> 00:35:00,110
in my writings I've
said three Czech.

560
00:35:00,110 --> 00:35:01,835
I think it was two
Czech and one French.

561
00:35:01,835 --> 00:35:06,150

562
00:35:06,150 --> 00:35:15,320

Two Czech, one French, one
German-Jewess, and one Dutch.

563
00:35:15,320 --> 00:35:18,320
Ellen Luz-- Luz, Lus--

564
00:35:18,320 --> 00:35:21,740
had been sent to a camp, with
her husband to another camp.

565
00:35:21,740 --> 00:35:25,540
Had been sent there because
they were running messages

566
00:35:25,540 --> 00:35:29,150
in the German police
dog mouth, trying

567
00:35:29,150 --> 00:35:40,600
to salvage some of the Jews.

568
00:35:40,600 --> 00:35:49,880

569
00:35:49,880 --> 00:35:57,460
The French girl was a
very, very advanced person.

570
00:35:57,460 --> 00:36:00,640
I liked her, and so
did the American major

571
00:36:00,640 --> 00:36:02,260
that I brought in.

572
00:36:02,260 --> 00:36:05,910
Two Czech girls, and Gazella.

573
00:36:05,910 --> 00:36:06,470
Gazella.

574
00:36:06,470 --> 00:36:11,020

Gazella was the German-Jewess.

575

00:36:11,020 --> 00:36:12,573

She was 15 years old.

576

00:36:12,573 --> 00:36:13,990

Had been in the
camp for something

577

00:36:13,990 --> 00:36:18,060

like three to four
years, and had

578

00:36:18,060 --> 00:36:20,850

been repeatedly saved
from the gas chamber

579

00:36:20,850 --> 00:36:23,820

by Ellen, the Dutch girl.

580

00:36:23,820 --> 00:36:26,890

She had resolved early that--

581

00:36:26,890 --> 00:36:28,800

I found this out from
one of the others--

582

00:36:28,800 --> 00:36:31,320

that she resolved early
that she would do everything

583

00:36:31,320 --> 00:36:36,180

in our power to pull
Gazella through.

584

00:36:36,180 --> 00:36:39,370

585

00:36:39,370 --> 00:36:45,470

I have no right to cast
illusions here, suspicions,

586

00:36:45,470 --> 00:36:49,710
but I want to make it clear
that what ran through my mind

587
00:36:49,710 --> 00:36:51,780
soon after I got to
know them was that there

588
00:36:51,780 --> 00:36:54,670
must have been some kapo--

589
00:36:54,670 --> 00:36:59,530
K-A-P-O-- stamp on
at least one of them.

590
00:36:59,530 --> 00:37:03,160
Probably Ellen,
but I don't know.

591
00:37:03,160 --> 00:37:10,910
The kapos were the ones
who did jobs for the SS.

592
00:37:10,910 --> 00:37:14,410
They were prisoners
who did jobs for the SS

593
00:37:14,410 --> 00:37:19,620
and had authority and lived
better than the others.

594
00:37:19,620 --> 00:37:23,640
I think, in the long run,
that although I was capable--

595
00:37:23,640 --> 00:37:26,430
and I want to put it right up
front, I don't mind saying--

596
00:37:26,430 --> 00:37:30,480
I'm perfectly capable of
having an intimate relationship

597

00:37:30,480 --> 00:37:33,750
with one or more of them.

598
00:37:33,750 --> 00:37:41,230
I avoided it almost totally
because of fears, not

599
00:37:41,230 --> 00:37:44,930
only health fears, but
fears of what I said.

600
00:37:44,930 --> 00:37:46,870
I did not want to
have anything to do

601
00:37:46,870 --> 00:37:48,055
with anyone who was a kapo.

602
00:37:48,055 --> 00:37:53,540

603
00:37:53,540 --> 00:37:55,070
The next day, there
were some people

604
00:37:55,070 --> 00:37:59,460
in the town who started
to give us stories

605
00:37:59,460 --> 00:38:02,190
about there's an
SS man still here

606
00:38:02,190 --> 00:38:05,320
and there, and blah, blah, blah.

607
00:38:05,320 --> 00:38:09,503
And I was part of a small team.

608
00:38:09,503 --> 00:38:10,920
There were two or
three of us that

609

00:38:10,920 --> 00:38:18,620
entered the house in response
to one woman's complaint,

610

00:38:18,620 --> 00:38:21,760
that there was an
SS man living there.

611

00:38:21,760 --> 00:38:28,730
And the young man was in
there, hardly 19 or 20,

612

00:38:28,730 --> 00:38:31,020
and denied it utterly.

613

00:38:31,020 --> 00:38:35,290
And the woman who
hat ratted on him

614

00:38:35,290 --> 00:38:37,360
went into the house and
upstairs and brought down

615

00:38:37,360 --> 00:38:39,350
a Nazi uniform, et
cetera, et cetera.

616

00:38:39,350 --> 00:38:42,470

617

00:38:42,470 --> 00:38:46,900
So it became almost
a clear cut case.

618

00:38:46,900 --> 00:38:55,710
The American Company C pretty
much had sway in the town.

619

00:38:55,710 --> 00:39:01,520
There was no other company
from the battalion or division

620

00:39:01,520 --> 00:39:03,260
living immediately in the town.

621
00:39:03,260 --> 00:39:05,390
We were the occupiers
there, and we

622
00:39:05,390 --> 00:39:11,070
had our mess, our kitchen on
the waterfront of the Danube

623
00:39:11,070 --> 00:39:12,570
in the heart of the town.

624
00:39:12,570 --> 00:39:14,250
It was a delightful spot.

625
00:39:14,250 --> 00:39:16,290
We enjoyed it.

626
00:39:16,290 --> 00:39:19,380
Every so often a
boat would come in

627
00:39:19,380 --> 00:39:23,160
and the Americans
would take it over.

628
00:39:23,160 --> 00:39:26,190

629
00:39:26,190 --> 00:39:28,110
Of course, outright
thievery was going

630
00:39:28,110 --> 00:39:34,410
on all the time under the guise
that because they're the enemy,

631
00:39:34,410 --> 00:39:37,880
it doesn't count as thievery.

632

00:39:37,880 --> 00:39:41,410

A boat came down
the Danube loaded.

633

00:39:41,410 --> 00:39:46,300

The hull was loaded with
120 bass accordions,

634

00:39:46,300 --> 00:39:52,820

and it didn't take them long
to put all the accordions up

635

00:39:52,820 --> 00:39:57,890

on the dock and pass them out
to anyone who wanted one, any

636

00:39:57,890 --> 00:40:01,140

of the soldiers who wanted one.

637

00:40:01,140 --> 00:40:03,730

I mean, soldiers were passing
it out to the soldiers.

638

00:40:03,730 --> 00:40:07,630

639

00:40:07,630 --> 00:40:10,420

Certain things
stand out my mind,

640

00:40:10,420 --> 00:40:12,700

hit me emotionally,
tremendously.

641

00:40:12,700 --> 00:40:20,110

642

00:40:20,110 --> 00:40:22,440

The young German,
the Austrian people,

643

00:40:22,440 --> 00:40:27,130

were much more harmed

by and affected by

644

00:40:27,130 --> 00:40:31,830
and astounded by the hill,
what went on on the hill,

645

00:40:31,830 --> 00:40:34,500
than the adults.

646

00:40:34,500 --> 00:40:37,530
I suspect that maybe
some of the adults

647

00:40:37,530 --> 00:40:41,070
tried to keep word
from the young people,

648

00:40:41,070 --> 00:40:43,530
I mean the teenagers,
although I don't really

649

00:40:43,530 --> 00:40:46,050
see how it was very possible.

650

00:40:46,050 --> 00:40:48,570
I think maybe they were
kidding themselves.

651

00:40:48,570 --> 00:40:50,270
But to make a long
story short, there

652

00:40:50,270 --> 00:40:53,790
was a small handful
of teenagers,

653

00:40:53,790 --> 00:40:58,080
led by Trudy, who was
a very intelligent,

654

00:40:58,080 --> 00:41:04,120
delightful young lady, who
they just sobbed and sobbed

655
00:41:04,120 --> 00:41:13,380
for days, and said
they were never

656
00:41:13,380 --> 00:41:16,860
going to have anything to do
with their families again.

657
00:41:16,860 --> 00:41:23,980

658
00:41:23,980 --> 00:41:30,820
Trudy and two other girls took
up living in a rat-infested--

659
00:41:30,820 --> 00:41:33,880
I say that, I'm
probably exaggerating--

660
00:41:33,880 --> 00:41:37,702
empty house or
building on the Danube,

661
00:41:37,702 --> 00:41:39,410
but they lived apart
from their families.

662
00:41:39,410 --> 00:41:43,430

663
00:41:43,430 --> 00:41:47,430
I think she ultimately went
with an American soldier

664
00:41:47,430 --> 00:41:50,153
back to the States,
but I'm not sure.

665
00:41:50,153 --> 00:41:51,570
I didn't see the
other, but I just

666

00:41:51,570 --> 00:41:59,460

saw the claims of the
statements of the two

667

00:41:59,460 --> 00:42:01,650

involved, the girl and the guy.

668

00:42:01,650 --> 00:42:11,930

669

00:42:11,930 --> 00:42:16,477

I would like to talk about the
American nurses, [INAUDIBLE]..

670

00:42:16,477 --> 00:42:20,770

671

00:42:20,770 --> 00:42:26,480

The American nurses were
fantastically empathetic

672

00:42:26,480 --> 00:42:29,870

and hard-working group.

673

00:42:29,870 --> 00:42:32,930

I'd see them for days
and days and days

674

00:42:32,930 --> 00:42:40,140

on end working their heads off
to accomplish what they could

675

00:42:40,140 --> 00:42:45,320

to save those who were
teetering on dying

676

00:42:45,320 --> 00:42:52,145

and to improve those who were
just plain ill and starved.

677

00:42:52,145 --> 00:42:55,280

678
00:42:55,280 --> 00:42:57,470
I got to know many up there.

679
00:42:57,470 --> 00:43:02,600
I used to go up in my spare
time to talk to people.

680
00:43:02,600 --> 00:43:10,190
I talked to a harbor master
from the Danube up in Hungary.

681
00:43:10,190 --> 00:43:13,900
I talked to many people.

682
00:43:13,900 --> 00:43:19,570
A Polish man gave me
his cigarette case,

683
00:43:19,570 --> 00:43:25,910
which had his girlfriend's
names stenciled--

684
00:43:25,910 --> 00:43:32,860
not stenciled, but in
metallic raised letters

685
00:43:32,860 --> 00:43:34,430
all over the case.

686
00:43:34,430 --> 00:43:35,950
And I knew it
meant a lot to him,

687
00:43:35,950 --> 00:43:39,337
but I felt that he really
wanted me to have it,

688
00:43:39,337 --> 00:43:40,170
and I still have it.

689
00:43:40,170 --> 00:43:44,440

690

00:43:44,440 --> 00:43:47,200

When I first saw the
girls in the camp

691

00:43:47,200 --> 00:43:51,240

at that house, the
five girls, I tried

692

00:43:51,240 --> 00:43:54,778

to get a medical person
down, but they said,

693

00:43:54,778 --> 00:43:55,820

are you out of your mind?

694

00:43:55,820 --> 00:43:59,320

I mean, look at what
we're faced with up here.

695

00:43:59,320 --> 00:44:02,320

So I knew that it was a hopeless
situation for the first couple

696

00:44:02,320 --> 00:44:08,100

of days, but gradually I got
an American major, physician,

697

00:44:08,100 --> 00:44:11,800

to come down on a theory
that it wasn't very far

698

00:44:11,800 --> 00:44:15,930

and that it needed
medical state,

699

00:44:15,930 --> 00:44:18,840

that it should be an
outpost of the camp.

700

00:44:18,840 --> 00:44:21,360

I had put a makeshift

thing up, saying

701

00:44:21,360 --> 00:44:25,730

that this is an outpost of
the camp by order of Captain

702

00:44:25,730 --> 00:44:30,210

[? Kirkabeau. ?] The
major finally came down,

703

00:44:30,210 --> 00:44:34,330

and after talking to the young
ladies and making arrangements,

704

00:44:34,330 --> 00:44:36,810

he agreed with it and put
his own name on the sign.

705

00:44:36,810 --> 00:44:39,914

706

00:44:39,914 --> 00:44:43,880

He said I did the wrong thing by
giving them food, which I knew,

707

00:44:43,880 --> 00:44:45,260

in retrospect, I had.

708

00:44:45,260 --> 00:44:47,880

709

00:44:47,880 --> 00:44:51,720

But they were better
off than most anyway.

710

00:44:51,720 --> 00:44:58,790

And he called for a hot meal
to be sent out to the house

711

00:44:58,790 --> 00:45:03,230

daily to them, and made
other arrangements.

712

00:45:03,230 --> 00:45:06,215

I think he took up with the
French girl later himself.

713

00:45:06,215 --> 00:45:11,160

714

00:45:11,160 --> 00:45:13,170

In all honesty and
practicality, I

715

00:45:13,170 --> 00:45:19,230

have to say that people have
these things on their mind

716

00:45:19,230 --> 00:45:20,880

all the time and
it never leaves.

717

00:45:20,880 --> 00:45:31,270

718

00:45:31,270 --> 00:45:36,400

I have some specific questions
that I would like to ask you.

719

00:45:36,400 --> 00:45:38,830

I'll give you a moment
to compose yourself.

720

00:45:38,830 --> 00:45:41,548

I'll let you clean up some
of the details from some

721

00:45:41,548 --> 00:45:43,090

of the things you've
already told me.

722

00:45:43,090 --> 00:45:45,760

723

00:45:45,760 --> 00:45:48,550

Please tell me the date
and the time of day

724
00:45:48,550 --> 00:45:50,380
when you entered Mauthausen.

725
00:45:50,380 --> 00:45:51,970
I'd like to have
the date on that.

726
00:45:51,970 --> 00:46:01,060

727
00:46:01,060 --> 00:46:07,000
I think it was May
5th, which was the--

728
00:46:07,000 --> 00:46:07,910
good Lord.

729
00:46:07,910 --> 00:46:09,820
I'm going to check this for you.

730
00:46:09,820 --> 00:46:13,200
Not right now because it
would take me time to find it.

731
00:46:13,200 --> 00:46:15,978

732
00:46:15,978 --> 00:46:19,160
I think it was May 5th, which
was right around the corner

733
00:46:19,160 --> 00:46:22,150
from the end of the war.

734
00:46:22,150 --> 00:46:26,660
As far as the time
of day was concerned,

735
00:46:26,660 --> 00:46:28,390

I think it was mid-morning.

736

00:46:28,390 --> 00:46:34,890

737

00:46:34,890 --> 00:46:37,500

Do you have any knowledge of how
many prisoners were liberated

738

00:46:37,500 --> 00:46:38,550

in the camp at that time?

739

00:46:38,550 --> 00:46:45,160

740

00:46:45,160 --> 00:46:47,530

The TO strength of
the camp was something

741

00:46:47,530 --> 00:46:53,310

like 20,000 to 30,000.

742

00:46:53,310 --> 00:46:54,570

Many had died.

743

00:46:54,570 --> 00:46:59,400

There had been a big push to
have the ovens going full-time

744

00:46:59,400 --> 00:47:00,270

before we came.

745

00:47:00,270 --> 00:47:03,920

746

00:47:03,920 --> 00:47:06,510

Many ran out into the
countryside and died.

747

00:47:06,510 --> 00:47:11,410

but probably, there had to
have been, above 20,000.

748
00:47:11,410 --> 00:47:15,420
But I could check that more
conveniently and easily.

749
00:47:15,420 --> 00:47:18,531
Do you want me to?

750
00:47:18,531 --> 00:47:20,110
You said the TO strength?

751
00:47:20,110 --> 00:47:21,740
Table of organization.

752
00:47:21,740 --> 00:47:25,070
[INAUDIBLE] It's
what was expected.

753
00:47:25,070 --> 00:47:26,950
TO means table of organization.

754
00:47:26,950 --> 00:47:29,410
Like the TO strength
of a division

755
00:47:29,410 --> 00:47:32,350
was something like 14,000.

756
00:47:32,350 --> 00:47:36,860
At the end of the war, it was
something like 3,000 or 4,000

757
00:47:36,860 --> 00:47:38,000
of the original numbers.

758
00:47:38,000 --> 00:47:42,020

759
00:47:42,020 --> 00:47:46,940
Would you please describe for
me the people that were there?

760

00:47:46,940 --> 00:47:49,010

When you came in,
was it just men?

761

00:47:49,010 --> 00:47:50,840

Was it just adults?

762

00:47:50,840 --> 00:47:54,020

Can you give me an idea of the
people that were imprisoned?

763

00:47:54,020 --> 00:48:00,180

764

00:48:00,180 --> 00:48:07,340

There were large
numbers of all sexes.

765

00:48:07,340 --> 00:48:11,700

I say all sexes
because the Germans

766

00:48:11,700 --> 00:48:16,500

regarded the homosexuals
as being among the worst.

767

00:48:16,500 --> 00:48:19,440

So there was this
homosexual contingency.

768

00:48:19,440 --> 00:48:22,930

There were loads and
loads of men and women,

769

00:48:22,930 --> 00:48:25,870

even younger ones
as witness, Gazella.

770

00:48:25,870 --> 00:48:28,420

771

00:48:28,420 --> 00:48:32,790

And they were factions
galore, ethnically.

772
00:48:32,790 --> 00:48:37,150
One of the largest and
overpowering factions

773
00:48:37,150 --> 00:48:39,593
were the Russian
prisoners of war.

774
00:48:39,593 --> 00:48:41,010
For some reason
or other, they had

775
00:48:41,010 --> 00:48:46,600
used Mauthausen to stash an
awful lot of these prisoners.

776
00:48:46,600 --> 00:48:56,290
And I was party to observing--
and sometimes helping out

777
00:48:56,290 --> 00:49:00,130
in a very minor way, such as
giving directions and that type

778
00:49:00,130 --> 00:49:02,020
of thing--

779
00:49:02,020 --> 00:49:08,700
the large number of groups
that came in to help

780
00:49:08,700 --> 00:49:11,170
and to repatriate.

781
00:49:11,170 --> 00:49:15,580
The Ukrainians, the Russians,
the Poles, et cetera,

782
00:49:15,580 --> 00:49:18,115
all sent in repatriation teams.

783
00:49:18,115 --> 00:49:20,860

784
00:49:20,860 --> 00:49:23,830
I saw them everywhere.

785
00:49:23,830 --> 00:49:27,880
I remember speaking
to a young lady who

786
00:49:27,880 --> 00:49:33,190
was reading a book in the
square of Vocklabruck,

787
00:49:33,190 --> 00:49:37,300
a town several miles away, where
I had an Austrian girlfriend

788
00:49:37,300 --> 00:49:39,340
later in the game.

789
00:49:39,340 --> 00:49:47,785
And this young lady, I
said to her, you're Ruski?

790
00:49:47,785 --> 00:49:49,520
And she got furious.

791
00:49:49,520 --> 00:49:50,740
She said, no.

792
00:49:50,740 --> 00:49:54,490
She said, I'm Ukrainish.

793
00:49:54,490 --> 00:49:56,290
I realized then that
there was a split,

794
00:49:56,290 --> 00:49:58,970
that the Ukrainians did
not consider themselves

795
00:49:58,970 --> 00:49:59,470
as Russians.

796
00:49:59,470 --> 00:50:05,740

797
00:50:05,740 --> 00:50:09,430
The Russian prisoners
had taken over much

798
00:50:09,430 --> 00:50:13,470
of the camp much of the
time late in the game,

799
00:50:13,470 --> 00:50:16,930
and the other prisoners
were cowed by them.

800
00:50:16,930 --> 00:50:22,240
One of the most moving sights
I've ever seen in my life

801
00:50:22,240 --> 00:50:26,230
was in back of the house
that Captain [? Kirkabeau ?]

802
00:50:26,230 --> 00:50:33,310
and I were billeted in, on the
street that dead ended right up

803
00:50:33,310 --> 00:50:37,240
there at the camp
grounds fringe,

804
00:50:37,240 --> 00:50:42,610
there was a gravel road
going from the camp

805
00:50:42,610 --> 00:50:50,890
down to the railroad
station into the town.

806

00:50:50,890 --> 00:50:58,170

And the time came when the
Russians were moving out,

807

00:50:58,170 --> 00:51:00,400

the first contingency,
the Russian prisoners.

808

00:51:00,400 --> 00:51:04,270

809

00:51:04,270 --> 00:51:06,590

Captain [? Kirkabeau ?]
and I stood

810

00:51:06,590 --> 00:51:11,990

on the back grass of
the dentist's house

811

00:51:11,990 --> 00:51:19,370

we were in, looking down on the
gravel road where the prisoners

812

00:51:19,370 --> 00:51:21,080

were marching down.

813

00:51:21,080 --> 00:51:24,290

They came down,
marching in formation,

814

00:51:24,290 --> 00:51:29,960

singing at the top of
their lungs, lustily.

815

00:51:29,960 --> 00:51:31,870

It was very, very moving.

816

00:51:31,870 --> 00:51:35,110

And the captain beside
me was very moved, too.

817

00:51:35,110 --> 00:51:37,670

It was his idea that we watch.

818

00:51:37,670 --> 00:51:40,970

He became even more moved
when he saw some of the groups

819

00:51:40,970 --> 00:51:44,420

that he sympathized
more with, because there

820

00:51:44,420 --> 00:51:50,150

was great prejudice at that
time against the Russians,

821

00:51:50,150 --> 00:51:55,580

just as there was against
the German military

822

00:51:55,580 --> 00:51:58,240

and German officials.

823

00:51:58,240 --> 00:52:05,210

The feelings that the American
soldiers had toward Germany

824

00:52:05,210 --> 00:52:11,330

changed totally along toward
Passau and into Mauthausen.

825

00:52:11,330 --> 00:52:15,580

And most of the
members of our company,

826

00:52:15,580 --> 00:52:22,270

save for a few ultra
egocentric guys,

827

00:52:22,270 --> 00:52:28,700

were very, very, very consumed
with hatred for the SS

828

00:52:28,700 --> 00:52:31,610

and very sympathetic with

the people that they saw,

829

00:52:31,610 --> 00:52:33,590

the people who were hurt by it.

830

00:52:33,590 --> 00:52:36,500

831

00:52:36,500 --> 00:52:38,450

Were there any
children in the camp?

832

00:52:38,450 --> 00:52:42,080

833

00:52:42,080 --> 00:52:47,030

By children, I assume you
mean like under pre-teen.

834

00:52:47,030 --> 00:52:54,290

There were from hearsay,
but I never saw them.

835

00:52:54,290 --> 00:53:06,590

836

00:53:06,590 --> 00:53:15,120

Did you personally witness any
acts of revenge or retaliation

837

00:53:15,120 --> 00:53:20,800

from the inmates to any
individuals and Germans

838

00:53:20,800 --> 00:53:23,650

who might still be around,
or even the camp itself?

839

00:53:23,650 --> 00:53:26,650

Did you see any acts of
violence or hostility

840

00:53:26,650 --> 00:53:29,845
on the part of the people
who had been prisoners?

841
00:53:29,845 --> 00:53:34,320

842
00:53:34,320 --> 00:53:39,100
Several days following
the liberation.

843
00:53:39,100 --> 00:53:43,340

844
00:53:43,340 --> 00:53:48,140
It was the situation
on tenterhooks,

845
00:53:48,140 --> 00:53:49,490
ready to burst out.

846
00:53:49,490 --> 00:53:52,830
And yes, I saw
isolated examples.

847
00:53:52,830 --> 00:54:00,980
And on the second or
third day, a minor--

848
00:54:00,980 --> 00:54:05,180
not a minor, but
an under commandant

849
00:54:05,180 --> 00:54:10,410
of the camp, whose
name I don't remember,

850
00:54:10,410 --> 00:54:14,800
had been caught
by the prisoners,

851
00:54:14,800 --> 00:54:16,900
and his head was put on a pole.

852
00:54:16,900 --> 00:54:20,530
I didn't see him beheaded,
but I saw the head.

853
00:54:20,530 --> 00:54:27,750
I saw striking and I saw
mauling and I saw crowds

854
00:54:27,750 --> 00:54:30,510
around one individual.

855
00:54:30,510 --> 00:54:37,290
And I'd call, quickly
get some of my fellow GIs

856
00:54:37,290 --> 00:54:39,990
to get them to pry
apart the group

857
00:54:39,990 --> 00:54:43,650
and see to it that it stopped.

858
00:54:43,650 --> 00:54:46,170
Yes, that happened
quite frequently.

859
00:54:46,170 --> 00:54:50,250
That happened quite frequently.

860
00:54:50,250 --> 00:54:56,940
It wasn't just the Russians
that there were problems with,

861
00:54:56,940 --> 00:55:03,510
but it was with the prisoners,
kapos, that developed hatreds.

862
00:55:03,510 --> 00:55:05,560
And there was much of this.

863
00:55:05,560 --> 00:55:09,150

That's one of the reasons I
think that those girls took

864
00:55:09,150 --> 00:55:14,140
that house, but I
have no right to say

865
00:55:14,140 --> 00:55:18,252
that that's true because I
don't know it to be true.

866
00:55:18,252 --> 00:55:21,290
Is it all right to say that?

867
00:55:21,290 --> 00:55:21,790
OK.

868
00:55:21,790 --> 00:55:28,290

869
00:55:28,290 --> 00:55:30,090
Did you, by any chance,
happen to witness

870
00:55:30,090 --> 00:55:32,400
the prisoners taking
down the Nazi symbol

871
00:55:32,400 --> 00:55:35,820
from the camp, the swastika?

872
00:55:35,820 --> 00:55:37,188
I guess it was over the gate.

873
00:55:37,188 --> 00:55:38,480
Did you happen to witness that?

874
00:55:38,480 --> 00:55:41,990

875
00:55:41,990 --> 00:55:44,420
Not close, no.

876
00:55:44,420 --> 00:55:47,640
I saw it right after it
happened, but not close.

877
00:55:47,640 --> 00:55:48,140
No.

878
00:55:48,140 --> 00:55:51,750

879
00:55:51,750 --> 00:55:58,400
You had been telling me before
about the burials and civilians

880
00:55:58,400 --> 00:56:00,470
being brought in to help.

881
00:56:00,470 --> 00:56:02,255
Were you there for
the actual burials?

882
00:56:02,255 --> 00:56:06,240

883
00:56:06,240 --> 00:56:08,190
Right after our men
had gone from house

884
00:56:08,190 --> 00:56:11,010
to house bringing up
as many as possible,

885
00:56:11,010 --> 00:56:13,500
I went up to see
what was developing.

886
00:56:13,500 --> 00:56:16,020
I wanted to give a
report to the captain.

887
00:56:16,020 --> 00:56:21,820

And yes, I saw it beginning,
and I saw some of the adults.

888
00:56:21,820 --> 00:56:25,520
I saw a couple of women
getting sick and ill.

889
00:56:25,520 --> 00:56:28,860

890
00:56:28,860 --> 00:56:32,790
Everyone I saw was pitching
in through either fear

891
00:56:32,790 --> 00:56:35,790
or compassion, one or the other.

892
00:56:35,790 --> 00:56:40,190
Probably a lot of fear,
mostly fear, mixed in.

893
00:56:40,190 --> 00:56:42,620
I think a lot of them
were afraid of what

894
00:56:42,620 --> 00:56:46,400
would happen to them if
they didn't play ball.

895
00:56:46,400 --> 00:56:48,200
So yeah, I saw them working.

896
00:56:48,200 --> 00:56:54,890

897
00:56:54,890 --> 00:57:00,140
With these burials, were the
bodies prepared in any way?

898
00:57:00,140 --> 00:57:02,450
Did anybody speak
over the graves?

899

00:57:02,450 --> 00:57:05,720

Can you give me an idea
of the actual process

900

00:57:05,720 --> 00:57:08,630

of burying the bodies?

901

00:57:08,630 --> 00:57:11,930

There were no great
formalities, but I

902

00:57:11,930 --> 00:57:18,180

did see at least two
examples of individuals

903

00:57:18,180 --> 00:57:22,350

speaking a foreign
language over the group.

904

00:57:22,350 --> 00:57:25,200

That's as far as
I can go on that.

905

00:57:25,200 --> 00:57:34,440

I don't believe that we
had any chaplains up there

906

00:57:34,440 --> 00:57:38,380

at that time, but I'm not sure.

907

00:57:38,380 --> 00:57:42,530

And were these graves marked
in any way, the burials?

908

00:57:42,530 --> 00:57:45,041

Were the graves marked?

909

00:57:45,041 --> 00:57:49,100

They weren't marked individually
because they were mass graves.

910

00:57:49,100 --> 00:57:54,010

And yes, the answer is that
the mass grave is marked.

911
00:57:54,010 --> 00:57:55,390
[INAUDIBLE]

912
00:57:55,390 --> 00:57:57,123
We're going to pause.

913
00:57:57,123 --> 00:57:58,790
We're just going to
pause for one minute

914
00:57:58,790 --> 00:57:59,832
and let you take a break.

915
00:57:59,832 --> 00:58:03,210

916
00:58:03,210 --> 00:58:07,720
OK, we're back now
after a brief break.

917
00:58:07,720 --> 00:58:13,880
I had asked you
about the burials.

918
00:58:13,880 --> 00:58:18,590
Did you see any evidence
of the mass graves that

919
00:58:18,590 --> 00:58:23,080
were left there by the
Germans before your arrival

920
00:58:23,080 --> 00:58:23,580
in the camp?

921
00:58:23,580 --> 00:58:29,250

922
00:58:29,250 --> 00:58:32,940

I had like a camera.

923

00:58:32,940 --> 00:58:36,480

I remember taking
some pictures, which

924

00:58:36,480 --> 00:58:40,440

most, if not all but one or
two, have somehow disappeared.

925

00:58:40,440 --> 00:58:43,230

926

00:58:43,230 --> 00:58:46,890

I did see lots of
graves, but I have

927

00:58:46,890 --> 00:58:53,580

difficulty now distinguishing
in my mind the vast grave that I

928

00:58:53,580 --> 00:59:00,390

knew was dug by the townspeople,
and other smaller ones.

929

00:59:00,390 --> 00:59:05,743

930

00:59:05,743 --> 00:59:11,370

I remember seeing a grave
with hundreds and hundreds

931

00:59:11,370 --> 00:59:16,620

and hundreds of bone-white,
chalk-white skeletons,

932

00:59:16,620 --> 00:59:20,930

just tossed in.

933

00:59:20,930 --> 00:59:22,790

I don't remember, frankly--

934

00:59:22,790 --> 00:59:25,880

I'm inadequate on
that-- whether this

935

00:59:25,880 --> 00:59:28,280

was what we discovered
when we went there

936

00:59:28,280 --> 00:59:30,770

or whether it was the later.

937

00:59:30,770 --> 00:59:33,330

938

00:59:33,330 --> 00:59:34,490

I can't help you.

939

00:59:34,490 --> 00:59:42,462

940

00:59:42,462 --> 00:59:46,480

You mentioned that
you took photos.

941

00:59:46,480 --> 00:59:52,030

Were there any official
photographs or moving pictures

942

00:59:52,030 --> 00:59:54,280

that were taken, that
you are aware of,

943

00:59:54,280 --> 00:59:59,780

to document what you were
finding when you came in?

944

00:59:59,780 --> 01:00:02,210

Yes, in the 11th
Armored Division files,

945

01:00:02,210 --> 01:00:03,590

there are quite a few of these.

946

01:00:03,590 --> 01:00:09,620

I did not go out of my way
one at this last reunion,

947

01:00:09,620 --> 01:00:14,280

the only one I've ever attempted
to take any away with me.

948

01:00:14,280 --> 01:00:19,430

I remember sending
home some pictures that

949

01:00:19,430 --> 01:00:23,470

had been taken by
official groups

950

01:00:23,470 --> 01:00:27,440

while I was there in Mauthausen.

951

01:00:27,440 --> 01:00:33,840

And as I said, I also had
taken a few of my own.

952

01:00:33,840 --> 01:00:43,730

I recall some pictures
of graves that probably

953

01:00:43,730 --> 01:00:49,370

had been dug for the
ones killed in the ovens

954

01:00:49,370 --> 01:00:54,010

before we got there, but
I can't swear to that.

955

01:00:54,010 --> 01:00:56,700

I can't at all.

956

01:00:56,700 --> 01:00:59,430

The whole thing is a
blur in my mind now.

957

01:00:59,430 --> 01:01:03,780

I think that I did not try
to process this information

958

01:01:03,780 --> 01:01:04,380

to keep it.

959

01:01:04,380 --> 01:01:07,500

960

01:01:07,500 --> 01:01:09,930

So emotionally
staggering was it.

961

01:01:09,930 --> 01:01:18,110

962

01:01:18,110 --> 01:01:21,430

Could you remember
if you found--

963

01:01:21,430 --> 01:01:24,250

you individually or
the group of you--

964

01:01:24,250 --> 01:01:27,025

if you found any records or
photos left by the Nazis?

965

01:01:27,025 --> 01:01:30,060

966

01:01:30,060 --> 01:01:34,080

I have to apologize and go
back to your previous question,

967

01:01:34,080 --> 01:01:40,800

and say that the gas chamber was
the best evidence of a grave.

968

01:01:40,800 --> 01:01:43,230

Not a permanent
grave, but one that

969

01:01:43,230 --> 01:01:46,170
existed before we got there.

970

01:01:46,170 --> 01:01:49,850
So if you're
looking for evidence

971

01:01:49,850 --> 01:01:52,910
that existed before we got
there, that nobody could have

972

01:01:52,910 --> 01:01:56,570
tampered with, the captain
and I were the first ones

973

01:01:56,570 --> 01:02:04,250
in that gas chamber of any
American alive, any outsider.

974

01:02:04,250 --> 01:02:08,630
Because the 41st cavalry did
not go in and do these things.

975

01:02:08,630 --> 01:02:10,520
They were engaged in
firefights outside.

976

01:02:10,520 --> 01:02:15,330

977

01:02:15,330 --> 01:02:18,970
Again, were there any records
or photos left by the Nazis

978

01:02:18,970 --> 01:02:22,650
that you're aware
were at the camp?

979

01:02:22,650 --> 01:02:25,620
Because Mauthausen, there
were other camps around

980

01:02:25,620 --> 01:02:29,330

and that was often a place
for records to be kept.

981

01:02:29,330 --> 01:02:30,900

Do you remember
if any were found,

982

01:02:30,900 --> 01:02:35,508

or were you aware of
any that were found?

983

01:02:35,508 --> 01:02:36,900

No.

984

01:02:36,900 --> 01:02:39,930

OK, I think I'm to take this
opportunity to pause and change

985

01:02:39,930 --> 01:02:40,430

tapes.

986

01:02:40,430 --> 01:02:44,250

So let's not go any further now.

987

01:02:44,250 --> 01:02:45,000