Imperial War Museum
Department of Sound Records

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EUROPE UNDER THE NAZIS 1933 - 1945

Dr D C Bradford, MB BCL MRCS LRCP MRCGP

CXW Can you tell me, first of all, Dr Bradford, what you were doing in the spring of 1945?

CB Well in the spring of 1945 I was in my third year at Barts as a clinical student. We were asked if we would be prepared to give up a month of our training to go abroad to do some relief work. Nobody told us exactly what we were going to do, but we thought that we were going to go to Holland to try and do something about the starving children that had been left behind by the Germans after the occupation. And of course, being medical students, we felt perhaps that we were rather feather bedded. Our friends were all in the army, the navy and so on, and had had quite a hectic time. I'd lost several friends who had been at school with me, in the navy and the air force. And this was our chance to get away and to do something, perhaps slightly different, to help the War effort.

I believe that most of the London hospitals were approached and they chose about ten people from each hospital to go on the list to volunteer to go abroad. And finally, when the day came, we had had our vaccinations and passports issued to us, and we went under the auspices of the Red Cross.

We wore battledress with a Red Cross flash. And this made it rather confusing for other military personnel because they didn't quite know what we were. They weren't sure whether we were officers or whether we were other ranks. One moment we were civilians and the next moment we were strutting about in battledress.

And we were taken by train to Cirencester and there we went into a camp just off the Fosse Way. And we were supposed to be ready to go at a moment's notice, to fly to Germany. We were told, when we got to this camp, which was called Rover Camp, that we were going to Belsen to relieve the inmates there.

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CXW Did the name Belsen mean anything to you before you went?

CB I can't remember that. One knew about concentration camps - I think so, I think Belsen was quite well known, even at that time because you have to remember that we weren't there until about five days after it was relieved. And so we weren't there for the initial release, so to speak. And it was very bad weather. There was snow on the ground, although it was the end of April, about 20th April I think, something like that. We went off on three days to various airports who had air strips, there was Down Ampney and South Cerney. And we got in the planes but the weather was too bad for us to fly, and we didn't actually fly until our fourth embarkation so to speak.

And then we flew off to an air strip at Celle in Germany, and we flew fairly low which was very interesting because in Dakotas - there were about four or five Dakotas, there were a hundred of us - and we could see a lot as we went. We could see, as we crossed the Channel, a lot of bomb craters for several hundred yards or half a mile or so inland, and then as we sped over we passed over war damaged towns. And then we crossed the Rhine and the damage got much worse and the towns and villages were quite severely bombed.

CXW Was there any danger of any enemy air activity?

CB No. It was about a week before the end of hostilities, something like that. But when we got to Celle there were snipers supposed to be in the woods there, and we were told it wouldn't be wise to stray away from our group.

CXW In the event, did anybody come across any snipers? Was there any firing?

CB No. We didn't see anything like that at all.

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And we were loaded up on to army trucks and taken, I suppose, about twenty miles to the Belsen area, and the first we knew that we were approaching the area, we were going along a country lane and there were a lot of conifers around, I remember. We came across a lot of barbed wire fences and this sort of thing, and a sort of blue smoke and a horrible smell, rather like a tip, burning clothes and this sort of thing, ordure and so on, And we were taken to our billets were at a place called Bergen. It was really a brick built military camp, and quite nice groups of buildings, two or three storey buildings. And we were allotted rooms.

We were taken down to the mess, to the officers' mess where we were to live and have our food and so on. And then after that, the first day, as far as I can remember, we just sort of found our feet and walked around the camp to see what was going on.

CXW What exactly did you see there?

CB As I say, this was very well laid out, the part which we were in, which was where the German troops were billeted, had been billeted. And that night we were all rather excited. The food was quite good. They gave us quite good food. We had to wait rather a long time because the mess was overloaded.

When we got up the following morning we were given a lecture by a Dr Meiklejohn who was to do with UNRRA. He was a medical doctor with UNRRA and he told us what our job to be, what our job was. And we were taken down in army lorries to the Belsen camp itself.

We didn't really know what to believe at all or what to find. And as we went in, we went in through the gates - the gates were actually open although there were sentries on the gates to prevent the inmates from leaving. But they were kept open all the time. And we went through a room and we had DDT powder sprayed over our hair, into our clothes and so on, because of

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course there was a danger of typhus, which as you probably know is carried by insects, by bugs and this sort of thing.

And when we got there we found that a number of huts - like any hutted camp, it might be in this country where you might have this sort of thing. For instance around the country there were balloon sites in England. There were barrage balloon sites with three or four huts. But here there were about a hundred and twenty huts and this awful pall of smoke and the smell over, hanging over the camp.

The huts, as far as I remember, were in rows. And there were these extraordinary skeletal looking people walking about. And we were each allotted a hut. And I was given a hut with a fellow called Eddie Boyd who was at UCH. He wasn't a Barts man. He was at UCH, and we had to just go in and start clearing it up. The hut, as far as I can remember, was about the size of a tennis court, a wooden hut, but probably about six or eight feet narrower than a tennis court. And there we supposed to be about 450 people in this hut. One end was partitioned off and there was - in the partition there were three-tier bunks, I suppose there would be about twenty four, something like that, and a table and chairs. And the rest of it, the inmates were just lying on the floor with their heads to the walls and all down the sides, and down the centre they were lying head to head. So you had four rows of people, just lying there in rags. There weren't really any blankets or anything. They had old clothes and overcoats covering them.

And our first job was simply to go round and see who was alive and who wasn't. You couldn't do anything else. There was no question of treating them at this stage. And also there was Eddie Boyd and I, and each hut was allotted two Hungarian military personnel who had been left behind by the Germans I think the Hungarians - I think they were German allies. I don't think they'd got any alternative. I don't think they

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combatant. I think they were were sort of orderlies around the place. And they had been left by the Germans when they evacuated the camp, just to keep the place going and I suppose to see that the people didn't get out, just sort of keep order.

Any way, we were each given two Hungarian soldiers. And we were told that they were to do the heavy work. And heavy work consisted of simply removing the dead from the hut. Eddie Boyd and I went round and we found, the first day, I should think there were about twenty people just lying there dead. And as we carried them out their clothes were immediately taken by the other inmates and they just covered them up and kept them warm because they were so close together. They were touching each other all the way around the hut.

And just as you have seen on the newsreels and the television, the bodies were just carried out in a most undignified manner. They got hold of a couple of arms, a couple of feet, and they were dragged out and put in a pile by the door. And then twice a day a tractor came round with a flat truck, and the bodies were unceremoniously laden on to these trucks, on to these flat wagons, and taken round to an open pit which would be about fifty or sixty yards long, about thirty yards wide, just chucked in, again unceremoniously, and covered with lime or something like this. And twice a day this wagon would come round.

Well now, we used to get up about half past seven, have breakfast. Half past eight we would be taken down to the camp each day. And each day two or three people were found to be lying dead there. And our job mainly was, as I say, to clear the dead, and try and decide who was likely to go on living and who wasn't, and also to see that whatever food there was was equally distributed. Because, what one found was that the people who were up and about, although there were four hundred and fifty people in the hut, there were probably about six hundred people who slept there. There were some ambulant

people. And it was natural, they were in such a state, they were the ones who got the food. And our job was simply to see that the food went to those who really needed it. For instance - and the food that we had to give them was pretty pitiful in a way. Of course they couldn't have a proper meal. We used to give them something called Bengal famine mixture which was a high protein diet with glucose in it and added vitamins. And this used to come round in great big cans, and we would dole it out. And we would try to see that those who really needed it had it.

And then occasionally, we were lucky enough to get some biscuits or some potatoes in their jackets, something like this, which we cooked in a great cauldron in the cook house. And gradually, we managed to get the food into them.

All the time, as I say, there were people dying. It was impossible to get down on your hands and knees and examine them and see what was wrong with them. They had diarrhoea. They couldn't get up to go outside. They just did everything where they were. And what we used to do is to try to move them up so that when they left their patch we were able to clean underneath them and /the Hungarians, we had mops and this sort of thing, just to keep the place clean.

And as time went by the hut got gradually emptier. And my hut was Hut 14. And we had managed also, some of the other students had managed to clear out, I think, huts 16, 18 and 20, which would have been next door. I think they were odd and even numbers on either side of a track really. And as time went by these huts were cleaned out so we could move the fitter ones on stretchers into these huts, where there were more bunks. There were two and three tier bunks.

My inmates were nearly all males. The camp was divided into a women's section and a /male/ section. But as time went

by we called these three huts that had been done up a sort of very primitive hospital. And we managed to get some sort of - we managed to tidy it up a bit and get it a bit cleaner. And also there were some doctors there. There was a Russian doctor and Czech doctors who had been inmates, who tried to help us try to get some sort of order into it, and to start treating the patients and so on.

But there again, the only medication that we had - we had aspirin tablets, we had a very primitive - well we would call it an M and B like compound, sulphonamide, which was an early antibiotic, or prontosil, And opium tablets /which were presumably a sort of laudanum tablet, which we just handed out like that. There were people in pain, they had sores and things, just lying there, they were in pain. We used to go round dispensing these tablets in a very sort of easy manner just to give relief. But the most important thing was to get fluid into them, and to get some sort of vitamin mixture, and this Bengal famine mixture.

Well then gradually the hut became empty and we were told that as the time went by the sicker ones were going to be moved up into Bergen where there was a military hospital, a German military hospital. One wing of this hospital was used for British personnel, one ward I suppose really. And the rest of it was to be used for people who had been moved from Belsen camp into better accommodation where there were actually beds. I can't remember whether there were sheets and things. I think there were paper sheets and paper towels which the Germans had left behind. And this was staffed by German nurses who had been left behind. I suppose they had been originally working in the military hospital. They hadn't retreated with the German troops because they'd been left there. There were very good X-ray facilities there. And as time went by, as Belsen was emptied, we were each given fifty or sixty patients in the new hospital at Bergen.

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And we could begin to examine them and just see what we had got. One part was kept separate for typhus cases, obviously. There was a lot of tuberculosis. We could get their chest X-rayed, and it was quite an efficient service. You'd fill in a form and they would be taken down to the X-ray department by orderlies. And then the next day you'd get an X-ray report. And of course in those days with tuberculosis there was no chemotherapy like there is now when the treatment was simply nourishment, bedrest and fresh air really. There wasn't anything else you could do. Other things we had to treat - we had to treat a lot of abscesses, bedsores, and of course their general condition was poor. People who had poor nourishment, they are likely to get secondary infections and urinary infections and pneumonia and this sort of thing. And we were able to treat these things once we'd got the patients, and once we were able to examine them and make some form of diagnosis, we were able to treat them with this sulphonamide that was in - available in those days.

And we could then begin to see a little bit of daylight probably. There was a time scale - the first fortnight really we were cleaning out Belsen itself. That was the part when we were actually in the huts. And the first week we didn't have any time off at all. We worked seven days flat out. And after that we were given a morning off a week and an afternoon off on another day. And it was insisted that we should do this because it was fairly hard work, and also it was a bit of an ordeal because we were pretty young. I think that being young as we were - I was about twenty three years old I suppose at that time - one could stand it more. I think that if one had been more mature - I think if one had to face it now and realise that these people who were in this terrible state were human beings and were somebody's mothers and fathers, and sons and so an and so forth, I don't think one could have borne it. But as it was, they was almost as unrecognisable as human beings. And of course we were young medical students.

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These people were all foreign, they couldn't speak English. We had an interpreter. I had a young Pole who had been a medical student in Cracow. And he was able to speak a bit of English, and he used to help us in our hut to try and get some sort of communication going. But as I say, people say to me, how could you possibly stand it? But it was I think that we were young and much more flexible, and could take it in those days.

CXW Were you apprehensive about catching anything yourself?

CB Well no, one didn't think of that, I don't know why not. I don't think doctors do really. Since I've been in general practice people say "Why don't you get 'flu and why don't you get various things?" One just doesn't think of that of that sort of thing, you just go and do it. After all, people who work in fever hospitals and so on, you have vaccinations and so on, but you don't think of that. Some of us were afflicted with diahorrea. I had one day off with diahorrea, but otherwise I didn't think of it at all.

But one of our members - there were two actually, two Barts men, one definitely had typhus and had to be flown home, and another one was suspected, but I don't think he actually had it. I think he just had a nasty tummy upset or something like that. But we didn't think of that at all really. One or two of us got the odd boil which I suppose was quite likely because if you had a crack in the skin and you're carting these people about, it was very likely that an infection would get in, and you'd get a boil or an abscess like that.

CXW How great was the danger of infection of anything in view of the precautions that you were taking?

CB We'd been vaccinated against typhoid and of course we'd been vaccinated against diptheria and smallpox. That was routine. But there was no typhus vaccination as far as I can

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remember. I/think there was any immunisation against typhus. There wasn't any cholera there as far as I can remember. But we we were fit people. I think if you had gone in there not being too fit, I think you're more likely to pick up an infection. The worst thing you could get really was a sort of dysentery. I think that would be the most likely thing because there were no washing facilities for us in the camp. We used to come home for lunch and have a jolly good wash. And then in the evening we were able to have a hot bath. This I think was the saving grace probably.

CXW You were talking about the need to get fluid into them. Was that because of the loss of fluid because of diahorrea?

CB Yes, because if anybody had persistent diahorrea, they get dehydrated, and that is more dangerous than anything. And a lot of them were starving. They hadn't had solid food for a long time and the only thing you could give them was fluid to get them used to it. A lot of the people had - some of the people had been in the camp for a number of years. But I think the reason why Belsen was so bad was because as the British had advanced from the west and the Russians from the east, I think that a lot of the people had been moved into the sort of central area, and so the number was swollen by people from other camps.

There was a crematorium there. At Bergen, which was the military establishment in the next village, there was a room which was full of watches. There was another room - which had been taken from the inmates. There were hundreds of watches. There was another room which was full of human hair because they were nearly all shaved, their hair was cut off before they were incinerated. And there was another room with other trinkets and things. It was an extraordinary situation really.

And also the other thing that made it more tragic in a way /was...

was this Bergen camp where we were was very nicely built. And there were very good facilities for recreation for the German troops who were there. There was a big place that was called a casino which was illuminated by a beautiful candelabra. And there was a stage there, all very nicely laid out, seats, and very good....

Very good sanitary arrangements, super lavatories and bathrooms for the German troops. And there was a cinema and dance hall attached to it. And I remember that there was a lot of glassware all with swastikas and the German eagle on, that were interesting.

I had been saying that the first part of the time we were really clearing out the camp. The second part of the time we were trying to treat the patients once we got them into the Bergen hospital. And as far as I can remember, we weren't so busy there because of course there were nurses there and what mostly these people needed was care and attention, and the nurses were able to see - the food situation had improved. They were given a better diet. There were three diets. We had to decide which ones were to have mainly a milk diet, a high protein diet - that was diet 1. Diet 2 was a little bit more solids. And the third, I suppose it was powdered eggs and powdered milk, this sort of thing. And then diet 3 was more or less a full diet with whatever meat and vegetables and things were available.

And there was a certain amount of classification to be done because some of these patients suffered from tuberculosis - those would probably be left there for some time. But the ones that were getting better, it was hoped that they would be moved on to DP camps and perhaps repatriated to their own countries.

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CXW Were the inmates totally apathetic or did they show any sign of interest in what was around them?

CB No. They were pretty apathetic. They didn't really know who we were at first. They were very grateful for any food. If you actually took the trouble to lift up their heads and try to get fluid into them or food, because a lot of them had to be hand fed, they would be very grateful. Occasionally you had chocolate or something like that which became available. They thought that was marvellous. And we used to dole out cigarettes.

The terrible thing was as I said, the fitter ones were so greedy and they didn't take any notice of the ill ones. I think that some of the illness in the cleaner huts which we called the sort of first hospital that we put them in, and the Czech doctors and people, they were pretty ruthless, and they looked after number one. We had to be a little bit strict with them to try and get them to do something for the patients. But there again, in those circumstances, there was not an awful lot you could do except see that they had their fair share of food really.

CXW Did they show any interest when VE Day came?

CB This was another thing. I was looking at my diary, and I made a remark that a lot of them didn't seem to take it in at all. I think they probably couldn't see any future - what was VE Day to them? There didn't appear to be any future for them. If they managed to live, well that would be all right, but even if they managed to live, what was there after that, just the prospect of going back to ruined cities in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

I remember in this hutted hospital that we had, there was a family came in, they were two brothers and a daughter. They were a family of two brothers and a sister. And they were all

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under twenty. And the girl was able to look after the men, after her two brothers. And one of the brothers died and it was a terribly tragic situation. She clung onto him and we had to forcibly separate her to get him taken outside. This was the sort of thing that you read about, and we'd never met this situation before. And there, she wasn't apathetic obviously because she was relatively well. But the ones that were just lying, they were really just vegetables.

CXW Did any of them speak to you about what they had been through?

CB Well not really. That would have been interesting. One could see what they had been through just to have got in that condition. But the language barrier - I had a bit of school German, a bit of school French, but that wasn't much use with these middle European people. Language is a great barrier. And there would be very few people at that time in England who could have spoken Polish or Czech. Languages are much better taught nowadays than they were in those days.

CXW Was there anything such as a block leader or person in charge of a hut before you went?

CB Yes. When we were alloted our huts, we were introduced to the block leader. There was nothing particular about the block leader except that he was probably the fittest chap around who could sort of supervise things. He was probably the fittest chap because he'd been looking after number one. This was the thing. And he, as I mentioned earlier, there was part of the hut partitioned off with a table and chairs and a few bunks, as opposed to lying on the floor, and this was where the block leader was and the fittest ones with their friends. They'd be sitting there playing cards and this sort of thing. But he wasn't a benevolent block leader. I don't say that he was necessarily not treating other people well, but it was just in the situation. He only had to go into the place

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to see that it appeared that sixty per cent of the people were past it any way.

CXW Were any of the inmates capable of giving a hand with the work?

CB I think some of them were. We had two or three doctors in this hutted hospital or whatever you like to call it, in this cleaner part. And I remember that they did have part of it which was a little bit cleaner than the other. If anybody had an abscess or a boil they would lance them and drain the abscesses. That was about as it went. But as far as I can remember we had very little help from the fitter people. We had one or two men who would perhaps - might have a friend who was one of the less well ones, and he might take care of them. But generally speaking it was a question of looking after number one as far as I could see. I think they'd got past it. And the situation was so hopeless and it was so horrible too with the mess around. That would be enough to put anybody off really.

CXW How much, if anything, had been done in the Hut number 14 before you and your colleague arrived?

CB I don't think anything. I think when the troops got in, whenever it was, five days before us, I think that they had cleaned up the outside part. I think there had been a lot of bodies around and that sort of thing, people who'd probably been lying around, and this is what we understood. And I think they'd got the bulldozers in to dig the pits and they had got the exterior part cleared up so that it looked slightly more respectable. But I don't think that they had managed to get into the huts, it was too big a job. I should think they - the ordinary Tommy, just opening one of those doors, would just shut it straight away, couldn't bear to go in and

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do anything. It must have been bad enough clearing up the outside of the place. There were no sanitary facilities. One can still picture - as far as I can remember there was a long pit with a pole strung across it which people sat on, and that was the lavatory arrangement. There would be a pit for so many huts.

CXW You mentioned that the clothes of the dead were in demand by the other inmates - does that mean that when somebody died there was a scramble for their clothes?

CB Oh yes. When they died the body was stripped and the better clothes, I suppose, they put on and the outer ones were just used as bedclothes really, to keep them warm. This was very much a feature of it. It seems very heartless, but on the other hand, what else could they do?

CXW Were they suffering very much from the cold?

CB When we got there it was cold but later on it had warmed up a bit. There was no heating in the hut as far as I can remember. And they'd just come through the winter. You just can't imagine how they got through it - of course huddled together they would get a certain amount of warmth from each other. But I don't think there was any heating in the hut that I can remember. There might have been a sort of stove at one end, the partitioned end, but I can't remember any heating.

CXW Were there any children in camp?

CB I didn't see any children at all. I had mostly the men, but as we got these three huts clean we had women come in who were brought in from other huts, and so the patients were mixed up to a certain extent there. But there were no sort of niceties with the sanitary facilities. People just went out, men or women, and just sat there and that was that.

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CXW Did you come across any tendency for people to take revenge on people responsible?

CB Well no, I don't remember seeing any Germans at all. I think there were Germans in the camp, and I think it was the Germans who were manning this tractor that came round with the flat truck and putting the bodies on, and then tipping them into the pits. I have a feeling that those were Germans. They were German nurses in the hospital and there were cook houses, and then there was another building, I remember, which was known as the human laundry. And as the patients were evacuated from Camp Number 1 to Camp Number 2 or the Bergen Hospital, they were taken to this place and all their clothes were stripped off and they were scrubbed from head to toe, obviously to get rid of any infection that was possible, and also because this was the first time that they'd been washed or anything for years. And this was done by German nurses in great big rubber aprons, and I think they had rubber gloves on. It was just simply a long room with a number of trestle tables on, and the bodies - they weren't just more than bodies - were stripped, men and women, were just put on there and they were scrubbed from head to toe and taken out on the clean side and put into ambulances. We had those big Austin ambulances, and we took them down to the other place. And those that couldn't go in say an army truck because they weren't well enough.

CXW How long were you there?

CB A month. As I say, the first fortnight was pretty hard work. The second fortnight was really supervision of the nurses and classifying the ones that were going to be fit and which were not.

On our days off we were able to see a bit of the countryside. Two friends and I hitched out to Brunswick one day. I don't think I had ever been abroad before. And we managed to get a

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lift to Brunswick, which was actually at that time in the American zone. And I was astonished to see the city, incredible - you would go down the streets, and there weren't houses in parts of it, any way, there were just piles of rubble. And none of it had been cleared away after the bombing. It was incredible. There were no buses or trams or anything like that. There were a few people in the streets who looked very miserable and glum, quite well fed and well dressed I remember, but the awful thing was, you'd be walking down one of these, pavements had gone because the rubble had come over the pavement. You were walking down the streets, there was a certain amount of military traffic. And you would come across a child and his mother, and we would probably smile at them, this sort of thing, if it was in this country. As soon as you smiled at a little child immediately it looked away. We'd had no experience of this sort of thing. We'd just come straight out from this country.

When we got there we managed to get a lift there, so we went to an American - I think it was an American headquarters which turned out to be the headquarters of the Luftwaffe for that part of Germany, which was a very lush building with beautiful floors and things. There was electricity there because the lifts were working, and this sort of thing. We were sitting down, we went in the officers' mess, an awful cheek really, I don't know how we got in. We just walked in with our Red Cross flashes. And nobody seemed to know what we were. We managed to have quite a good meal there, and then we managed to hitch hike home again.

Then another day we hitch hiked into Celle which was a fine old town. That hadn't been damaged very much. There was a lot of half timbered buildings there. And I remember we went into the museum which was closed, but we managed to get in and we were taken round by the vicar's son who could speak a bit of English and was quite pleased, I think, to practise his English on us. But otherwise, that was all we saw of the countryside round about.

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CXW You said how little could be done for them from the medical point of view - but how useful was your own medical knowledge? You're not saying that somebody without medical knowledge could have done the same job?

CB I think it's hard to say, I should think probably not. I think a nurse could have done it just as well. We were half trained doctors. Also one was used to a certain amount of illness and unpleasantness, but I think that perhaps it was obviously useful having medical knowledge, but I wouldn't pretend that we were indispensable as doctors. I think that it could have been done by orderlies probably just as well. All that you had to do was supervise that the food went round really in the first part, and that those who couldn't help themselves were helped. Latterly in the other hospital the medical knowledge did come in helpful because we were able to examine the people and wash them, clean them, and so on and so forth, and we were able to try to make some sort of diagnosis.

CXW Were you present for the end of the camp?

CB Unfortunately we saw part of it being burnt down. As the huts were cleared the individual ones were burnt but I think the actual ceremony of burning the camp was on the day that we went off to Brunswick. I think that was when it was finally cleared, our day off, we had gone off to Brunswick, and when we came back we heard.

And of course the other rather amusing thing was that the day we went to Celle, nobody knew when we were going to go home. We were getting a bit fed up with it. When once the people were in the hospital there wasn't so much for us to do, and we had our finals to take in that summer. Or perhaps we had another six months. But we had an exam looming up, and we wanted to get home because we didn't feel we were pulling our weight latterly. They said we were going to go home on the 26th or 27th and so it went on like that. And nobody really knew

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and this day we went to Celle, I think with Laurie Ward and John Kilner I think it was, and I. And we were hitching back to camp and to our dismay a lorry stopped and it had a whole party of our colleagues on their way back to Celle airport who were going back home. And they'd only had forty minutes to pack up their goods and things. So we were a bit dismayed about this.

Any way we managed to get a lift back to Belsen, and when we got back to our room, we found that the - I think some of the inmates of the camp who had been billeted round about, had broken in and pinched half our gear. Add that made us a bit cross as we'd got one or two souvenirs and things. And the next day we managed to persuade somebody to find an aeroplane for us and the remaining ten or twenty of us were brought home.