

BERRY

I: Would you please tell me your name

H:: my name is H. S. Berry

I: What does the H. stand for

H: Horace Berry

I: Horace where were you born and when

H: I was born in 1920 in Greer South Carolina

I: Did you live there

H: Yes, South Carolina. I went to Clemson

I: Tell me a little bit about your family

H: As of now

I: No back then

B:; Back then. Well, I had a brother and a sister. We were a small family really.

I: Did you go to school in Greet

H: Yes, I did

I" Where did you go to school

H: Greer High School

I" And then

H: to Clemson and I was in a class of 41 at Clemson.

I: What did you do before you went into the army

H: Well, during high schools a few jobs on the side not too many. One was taking care of a little fish pond where people fish and I another I suppose to help clerk in a store but I was too small to do that

I: What year did you go into the army

H: I went in 41 right out of Clemson

I: Right out of Clemson in what capacity

H: As a second lieutenant. See Clemson was all military at that time and I'd say 99% of us went directly into the service. In

fact I received orders for active duty before I got my diploma

I: You went in as an officer

H: Second lieutenant yes

I: And where did you serve at that time where were you stationed.

H: well, initially I went to Camp Crough for ten months and then I went to the Canal Zone for ten months and I joined a battalion and I spend the rest of my service in that particular battalion.

I: stationed where

H: Well, I was stationed all over. When I came back to the states I went to Fort Benning Colorado Springs California, then back to Benning and overseas again

I: What year did you go overseas

H: 45

I: Where were you stationed there

H: Well all over. We went to Africa. We were on the move

I: Did you see any action

H: Yes I saw some action

I: How did you happen to come to a camp

H: Well, if I can explain a little something. We were part of the 71st came to this camp. 71st infantry division. We were part of the third army which was Patton's army and this stage of the war when the tank people were moving forward real fast. The enemy was retreating and also the infantry were were going through what you call a sweeping operation . We'd go in the woods where we thought there were small groups of enemy and we'd go in small towns trying to prevent sniper fire and that sort of thing and then we went in one more time .one morning and did a standard procedure and when we were leaving we ran into some refugees. That's the first I saw of the people of this camp

I: Where was this? In what country

H: Austria long about Austria

I: Had you heard about what was going on in the camps

H: No not at all nothing we were just in Europe trying to survive from day to day

I: And how did you get into this camp. How did you happen to

H: We saw some inmates along the road. I mean we were after we left this little town and we knew they were prisoners they had on stripped clothes underneath all their raggedy clothes and they were starved and there weren't many of them at that time and some of us had chocolate bars and some of us had cigarettes. We gave them. They ate the cigarettes and chocolate bars were too much for them. They got stomach cramps and just turned over. Unfortunately some of them died right there on the road. It's just too much for them all at once, and then we went into Lunbarout and I was assigned. My company K company 5th battalion Centrax Division was assigned to protect the rear cp which we had extended procedures for doing certain things--guarding the bridges and sent places and guarding the rear cp and we had a lot of German prisoners that time all the prisoners our division had been getting were sent back to rear cp . We had over 10,000 German prisoners at that time. So I was told to this camp to go to it bury the dead and send the living to a hospital in Austria. I assigned my third platoon to get to it and I didn't stay there all the time but it was my duty to go by every once in a while and check on it. And they's some pictures in this book here that shows what was going on and they were starved. They were literally starved and some of them had knowledge enough to know what was going on but most of them didn't they were just sitting around dazed trying to pick lice off of themselves and sores

I: How big a camp were this

H: Well the book says there were up to 18,000 there . Now I don't know how to verify that but there were a lot of them there. I had no earthly idea.

I: How did you feel when you first came in

H: Well I couldn't believe it. I just didn't know anybody could be treated like that and this book relate\s that they were Hungarian Jews distinguished doctors lawyers and the elite types of people and I myself couldn't understand why the Germans were trying to save them except for their knowledge. If they were trying to save them why didn't they feed them but they didn't and this camp was all wooden. I don't remember seeing no cement. no cement floors. I don't remember seeing barbed wire. I don't remember seeing any steel. It was strictly wooden and it appeared to me it was a temporary camp made out of logs and slabs. slabs from a saw mill. And I don't remember seeing any fences but anyway I don't know how long it took us to get them all to Vels Austria that was living and this book here would show SS troopers. We used only SS troopers to bury them. We made that as a point. I can mention we had plenty of those to get so we did. And under the direction of our military government is what I did primarily

I: Can you describe what the camp looked like

H: Well I keep referring to this book you know ap picture's worth a thousand words. It was in a wooded area a think woods the trees

weren't but about a foot in diameter and you could be within 100 yards of it and you wouldn't know it was there and the latrine had twelve holes in an outhouse latrine and most of them never did make it to the bathroom and I understand they were shot if they had to get rid of anything before they go to the latrine and the smell was unbelievable. It was just something you will never forget. The inmates the prisoners had tried to make little fires around and tried to cook something. There was a dead horse down the road that they'd found and trying to bring in and feed themselves.

I: This was after the liberation

H: This was after the liberation of this camp yes. This camp did I ever say it was Duntchkirehaluger and like I say it was near Lambarth ,Austria. Now where the name came from I have no idea

I: About how many dead did you find there do you know

H: There's no way to count them. They were scattered. They were scattered all over the woods. Some of them tried to walk off and all of course we buried them. We had the SS prisoners bury them in mass graves in the woods

I: And these refugees were sent where. You sent the live ones somewhere you said

H: to hospital in Vels Austria and we used our trucks to do it and our drivers. The SS loaded them none of the were able to get up on the truck. We had to help them get us all of them.

I: Were there people around the camp when you liberated the camp

H: none what so ever you wouldn't even know the camp was there

I: About how far was it from a town did you ever know

H: I'd say two and 1/2 to 3 miles and incidentally. I'm glad you asked that somebody along the line decided to send a groups of us into Lonmbard and knock on all the citizens doors and made them get up the ones that were able and Marched them down to this camp so they could see it. And there were most women and children mostly there weren't many men in the group. They shook their head. I'm sure they didn't realize what was going on the citizens didn't

I: You said the smell was so bad. How war away could you smell it

H: It depended which way the wind was blowing. I'd say 100 yards at least

I: About how long did it take you to clean up the camp

H: I don't remember that for sure. several days and it may have been a week

I: After the cleaning up of this camp, where did you go from there

H: Well, I might intervene at this time. There was a fellow that was an art student, Norman Nichols and he was sent to make sketches of some of the scenes at this camp and they are in this book also. And then we went on to Ins River in Austria and we stayed there a few days and the war was over

I: Did you see any of the other camps in Europe

H: Yes I went to Dachau after the war. I have a lot of pictures of those too and may

I: we'd like to see some of those just hold them up. Hold them up near your face

H: The entrance to the building I have several of those. They were elaborate buildings. These aren't the best pictures in the world. I had a camera I'd borrowed and the film wasn't too good but these were the motes-I mean the crematory where they burned them and first of all here's a wall and there's a stain across the top and a stain across the bottom and I have another picture that's similar to that that they shot the prisoners that didn't want to cooperate and they let some of them stand and some of the kneel. It's their choice I guess, but such a choice. This is another picture of the wall. See blood stains here and blood stains there and as everybody knows they had the crematory there and burned them. I'm sure this is nothing new to most people who've heard of Dachau. They ave this false room. nobody knows anything. They told the prisoners to dress to undress the men and women were sent in there on a fake claim like they was gonna take a shower and they were gassed and there's a room next door to it that was no windows and all in it and they piled the bodies in there til they got around to where they could burn them and I have a horrible thought-the horrible thing I thought this picture is long dog pens. German police dogs. There's a close up of them that they helped guard the place and they fed them by turning them lose in that room where the bodies were stored. Of course the bodies weren't burned very well. There's a picture here showing on top of the pile of ashes there's afoot. There's a foot right there on top of a pile of ashes and like I said it was a well built building if it was something they transformed. See here it shows a good building with roofs like they had in Germany. now this right here these boxes to put bodies in I never did find out what they were for. Right next to that they was a room where they'd taken some of the ashes and made little patties out of them. I brought one home and they put numbers on the patties and supposedly the Germans would send those patties in an urn to some of the family and make up some kind of a story that they died this way or that way but you know how they died. But anyway they drier to deceive the people someway like that. i guess it was strictly some of the propaganda the Germans were real good at . And the motes all around this camp and wire fences. It would have been impossible to get out. Nobody in the world a prisoner could escape from there

I: How did this affect you

H: Well I don't really like to think about it but it was part of history and it's inconceivable how can people of one race can treat people of another race that way. It's inconceivable but it happened under Hitler's regime. He certainly brainwashed a lot of people that's all I know

I: Were the American soldiers surprised when they went into Dachau

H: Naturally yeah

I: Were there any live prisoners at all when you went into Dachau

H: Well some of the survivors were guides there. They told us about the gasing in the room and about the dogs and that type of thing. The dogs were gone. I remember that but some of the survivors told us all about this

I" You saw a few survivors there when you were there

H: Yea

I: Had this sort of permeated throughout the army what was going on

H: No body had any idea

I: No body had any idea?

H: Not really

I: When were you discharged from the army

H: January of 46

I: And what did you do when you came back home

H: I came back to Spartenburg. Yes and I worked 2 years with Clemson in the extension service and 2 years in South Carolina Peach Corp Association which is the largest peach Coop in the world. It doesn't exist now

I: Were you married

H: Yes I was married in 43 during the war

I: Do you have children

H: I have 2 boys and 4 grandchildren

I: Horace do you ever think of Dachau and that experience

H: I hat e to say it but you try to tune it off

I: Did you ever talk about it to anybody

H: No really no

I: Did you ever tell your wife about it

H: No I didn't. Of course she's seen the book and these pictures. I just never have talked much about it

I: Do you think it affected any of your thinking or emotions

H: Well, if you swell on it it will like I said I just try to tune it off course thats been long years ago I went to Emory and gave some information on this and I sent some information to Washington too. You know they're building a national holocaust building there in Washington near the Lincoln memorial. I guess you knew all this and I sent them some information and I'll leave some here

I:" Thank you very much. Is there anything else you'd like to say

H: No really and I appreciate this opportunity of doing this

I: We thank you so much for coming

H: I hope some of the school kids will realize what was going on then.