

April 9, 1992

Slate #1349-029

Interviewee: Rev. George Chassey

Interviewer: Richard Irwin

Notetaker: Rose Shames

0:00- Episcopal priest from Massachusetts who has lived in South Carolina for many years

1:00- Following student times, enlisted in Air Force on Dec. 29, 1941

2:00- From Fort Devin sent to Missouri and then to California. In 1942, assigned to group and went to England. P51 crew chief. Escort for bombers. Landed in Normandy on D-day+11 days. Went across France to Germany.

4:00- Hitler - was referred to as "villain of the world". There was a strong feeling of the importance of getting into Germany. Provided air support for Patton's army; feeling of great mission.

5:30- Had no knowledge of what was happening to Jews at first. Gradually, witnesses began to report what they were seeing.

6:45- Description of personal sense of disbelief - inhumanity.

8:00- Description of coming into camp during Spring 1945. Mission was to repair planes. British soldier came by and told them about Ordruff Camp. They decided to go and look around. Odor of death; Germans said they didn't know what was happening. Commander ordered Germans to go into camp to see and help bury the dead.

13:20- There were series of one story buildings, and bodies stacked. Description of machine gunning, and execution by hanging.

15:50- Reaction to what he saw

17:00- Spent a year as student in France after the war.

19:23- Back at home, communicating his experience. Was a high school teacher and told his students about what he has seen.

21:45- What effect on his life? Man's inhumanity to man! Ashes! In Christianity, ashes symbolize G-d's love for world. But ashes of Holocaust was contrast.

24:30- What do other clergy think? There has not been much discussion among clergy about the Holocaust.