-TITLE-REGINALD ASHBY
-I_DATE-OCTOBER 1981
-SOURCE-INTERNATIONAL LIBERATORS CONFERENCE
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-EXCELLENT
-IMAGE_QUALITY-EXCELLENT, EXCEPT FOR ONE PORTION
-DURATION-TWENTY MINUTES
-LANGUAGES-ENGLISH
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
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1:44 Reginald Ashby. International Liberators Conference. He will be speaking about his experiences in Gusen, Austria.

2:13 He was 23 years old at the time of liberation. He had studied tool and dye making at trade school in the United States.

2:33 He enlisted and became a member of the 11th Army Division.

2:54 His rank was staff sergeant. His infantry liberated Gusen I. There were 2 Gusens.

3:15 They had had no information about concentration camps. A few days before they arrived at Gusen they saw some POW's that had escaped from camps. This was their only exposure to the concentration camps before they arrived.

3:45 He had no expectations of what he thought he would see.

4:13 Gusen was   a smaller camp than Belsen and many others. Ashby's unit happened to be going by the camp so they just opened the gate and went in.

4:45 The camp was completely walled in. It was a smaller version of bigger camps. They saw prisoners in various stages of starvation. There were dead bodies lying all around.

5:41 "The impact of something like that is something that is just about impossible to describe...The whole thing was colossal. No one has found words to describe these things and I can't either."

6:54 The camps operated completely independently from anything else. The inmates lived in a world all their own.

7:46 There were some women, but no children in the camp. The majority of prisoners were men

8:10 Ashby was not given any orders about the camp. His superiors had no more knowledge or idea how to cope with it than he and his men did.

8:20 There were no guards when he arrived. Everyone had left. They walked straight in and faced to resistance to entering the camp.

9:19 He had to use his own best judgement as to what to do since he had no orders. So the first thing he did was to establish a guard at the gates.

9:29-10:33 NO PICTURE

Ashby notes indifference of German civilian population as to what was going on in the camps.

11:20 A local German housewife asked Ashby what his purpose was in letting "them" all out.

11:27 She said, "All these people are Jews."   This was the typical sentiment of the population.

11:43 The civilians were all aware of what was going on in the camp. They had no pangs of conscience. It did not bother them.

12:15 Ashby cannot figure out how the civilians not only permitted this, but actually aided the effort.

13:23 Ashby was not surprised that he had received no orders about how to deal with this. No one knew how to cope. He used his own best judgement.

14:06 Ashby decided to maintain the camp as it had been running because he knew that something would be done soon. There was an Englishman there who spoke German. Through him Ashby communicated with the prisoners. He found out that they did have food so he instructed them to continue with the rations as they had been doing.

14:45 "The whole thing was a very disjointed uncoordinated effort."

15:18 Ashby had to leave the camp for a while to perform another duty. In that time, another platoon came in, along with medical personel.

16:07 He has shared the experience with some family members but has found that the majority of people do not respond to this.

16:24 "They do not want to know or they disbelieve what you are telling them"

17:16 He feels that we have not learned from history.
18:00 Ashby emphasizes that this discussion only scratches the surface of the experience.

19:17 Even if you could justify the extermination of a people, these people did everything to make it more painful and torturous.

19:36 "It's beyond comprehension what people can do to people."

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