Edward was born on August 17, 1920 in Minnesota. He was twenty-four during his involvement in World War Two. At the beginning of the war he had just finished high school. Edward now lives in Sock Center (ph), Minnesota. He is semi-retired and works as a purchasing agent at a nearby hospital.

Edward served as a corporal during the war. On Saturday the 14th in April of 1945, part of his battalion liberated a camp in Gardeleiggen (ph). Edward arrived there on the 15th. At Gardeleiggen the battalion found 1016 prisoners who had been massacred by the Germans on Friday the 13th. Supposedly, the Germans had covered a barn with straw and other flammable materials and then proceeded to set it on fire after they had marched the prisoners in.

It was a large tile barn which was located well out into the country near an airfield for the training of German officers. The group of prisoners who were massacred had started out in Prussia, where they numbered over 2000. They were forced to march for 18 days to Gardeleiggen (ph) and in the process the number of survivors was reduced to 1016. Some of the prisoners were convinced into being guards in return for the possibility of being released. These guards were pushed into the barn with the rest of the prisoners at the last minute.

Edward had no idea that he would come across something like this. He didn't notice any civilians around at the time. By then Edward remarks that he was accustomed to death, but that he was considerably angry at the sight of this mass destruction. In his opinion, "The only good German was a dead German."

Edward describes the SS as trained beasts in action, yet he remarks that after they had been captured they were quite meek. He came across a young German fellow who spoke perfect English and who gave him some information. Upon screening him later on, he discovered to his surprise that the young man was an SS trooper.
1:07:38 There was no serious discussion among the American soldiers about what they had seen at Gardeleiggen (ph). Edward was simply "hardened" by the experience. His resentment towards the SS grew considerably. He remembers seeing bodies in the barn which were still smoldering when they arrived. Apparently, the SS had shot holes in the building in order to throw in grenades which would start a second fire. Approximately ten survivors remained from the incident. Edward was assigned to guard them.

1:08:51 One of the ten survivors was a Hungarian Jew named Bondo Gaza (ph). He was a musician and served as an interpreter for the Americans. Edward and the other guards had to protect the survivors from any Germans who might try and kill them because they were witnesses.

1:10:36 Bondo Gaza (ph) had escaped by crawling to an airfield and waiting for the Americans to come. The Germans had already surrendered at this point. In order to find the guilty SS officers, people were lined up in front of their houses and the survivors had to identify them. Edward recalls how they would spit on high ranking German officers.

1:12:25 Edward doesn't know what happened after he left. He remembers having to wait on the Elbe river to meet the Russians. Patton's tank had already crossed and was on its way to Berlin. He stayed on the bank of the river in a town called Hangerman (ph) for a week. It was there that the Germans surrendered.

1:14:40 Edward remarks that the citizens of Gardeleiggen (ph) were not at all aware of the atrocity, so they were marched out to view it. Each family had to take a corpse out of the mass grave, to set up a cemetery, and to properly bury them. It was the job of each family to keep their one grave green with grass. The town erected a large plaque for the 102nd division (Edward's division).

1:16:02 Edward noticed very few children all throughout Germany. He saw mostly elderly people and women. He remembers when he came to a house looking for Germans for the first time, a mother and child quivered on the floor, begging for their lives. They had been told that the Americans would come to rape and kill them.

1:17:40 Edward was single at the time of the war. He has written about his experiences in letters and has 26 photographs. Edward is a Catholic, although he is not very religious.

1:19:01 Edward has no thoughts about God's role or the religious implications of the event. In his opinion, these things are simply not supposed to happen. Edward had keen informed about American prisoners being tortured, but he had heard nothing about the atrocities committed by the SS until he reached Buchenwald. After that, he witnessed many other such atrocities.
1:20:45 Edward never viewed the Holocaust as a persecution of the Jews. Until he saw a television show recently he had forgotten about the stars that the Jews used to wear. He remarks that he saw nothing in the midwestern papers about the Gardeleiggen (ph) atrocity, and he believes that is should be publicized.

1:22:09 Edward has a picture of the barn in which the 1016 people were killed. The intense heat and lack of oxygen suffocated them. The doors didn't burn off, he noticed finger nail marks on the poles which held up the roof. One man had dug under the door and was shot—he had worn his fingers down to the first joint.

1:25:10 After witnessing this, Edward thinks that we have the greatest nation on earth. He remarks that one does not realize this until one leaves for a while. Edward marches in the Memorial Day Parade every year.

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