

Interviewee:	<u>SOLOMON</u> , Philip G.	Date:	May 28, 1987
Interviewer:	Ellen Rothman		
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SUMMARY

Philip G. Solomon served in the United States Army, in the 101st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized, which liberated the Landsberg concentration camp on April 28, 1945. He describes his unit's arrival in Germany in February/March 1945, emphasizing their military mission and their lack of knowledge of concentration camps or the scale of mass murder. His first indication of Nazi horrors occurred after crossing the Rhine, heading east, when his unit captured small towns, liberating displaced persons from forced labor camps (mostly Eastern Europeans). His second indication came when liberating several prisoner of war camps. He details the ominous experience of finding sealed railroad cars on a siding filled with dead concentration camp victims. On April 28, 1945, his unit stopped near the city Landsberg, waiting for a bridge to be repaired and unaware of the camp 1000 yards away. A shift in the wind eventually alerted them to the smell, and sight of smoke from the camp where retreating S.S. had just massacred the inmates. The unit found about 20 starving and ill survivors. He details the conditions of the camp and his feelings upon seeing the massive piles of bodies, hangings and other atrocities. The unit had no food or medical supplies and could only radio for help. They were commanded to leave Landsberg after 20 minutes in order to seize and hold a causeway near Munich.

He describes in detail the reactions of prisoners to liberation, the response of the young soldiers to the dual experience of witnessing the atrocities in the midst of war, and his own complex and gradually evolving psychological reaction to this experience. He stresses his concern about ongoing genocides since World War II. And he affirms his faith and pride in his Jewish heritage.

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SUBJECT HEADINGS

United States-Army-Cavalry, 101st. Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized
Personal narratives - Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)
World War, 1939 - 1945 Personal narratives - American
World War, 1939 - 1945 - Atrocities
World War, 1939 - 1945 Germany
World War, 1939 - 1945 Psychological aspects
World War, 1939 - 1945 - Concentration camps - Liberation, Germany
Crimes against humanity, German
Landsberg am Lech (Germany: Refugee camp).