

Interviewee: LAUTMAN, Irving
Interviewer: Philip G. Solomon

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Audio tapes: 1 English
Restrictions: No restrictions

Transcript: 1 vol. (unpaged) English
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SUMMARY

Irving Lautman, a Jewish American soldier later captured as a prisoner of war, served as Private 1st Class with the 36th Armored Infantry of the Third Armored Division in France and Belgium in 1943-44. He was captured September 1944 during a battle with the Germans near Aachen, Germany. He was sent to prisoner of war camps at Limburg and Brandenburg. During the first three months he was listed as missing in action and held in a Stalag with non-Jewish POW's. He refers to committing sabotage in a cement factory. Initially his Jewish identification was unknown as the Germans never interrogated him nor examined his dog tags with "H", for Hebrew, designation. This became known during a Red Cross interview that elicited confidential information about prisoners' religion, after which he was segregated into a group of about 20 Jewish prisoners. They were sent to work in a forest as lumberjacks from February to March 1945. They needed to be wary of shell-shocked German guards, just returned from the Russian front who fired at prisoners indiscriminately. He relates cruel beatings of Russian prisoners as compared to treatment of Allied POW's, including those who were Jewish. Approximately May 1, 1945 German guards abandoned the group of Jewish prisoners who then walked to the West, carrying a makeshift American flag. An American tank column transported them to an airport where they were flown to Nancy, France for several weeks of recuperation. He returned to the U.S. by boat and served at Camp Dix, New Jersey and Fort Ord, California. He was married shortly after his return.

SUBJECT HEADINGS

Prisoners of war, American - Germany
World War, 1939-1945 - Participation, Jewish
Stalag (Limberg, Germany: prisoner of war camp)
Stalag (Brandenberg, Germany: prisoner of war camp)
World War, 1939-1945 - prisoner of war camp