

Interviewee:	<u>LESSER</u> , Sydney	Date:	December 14, 1988
Interviewer:	Philip G. Solomon		
Audio tapes:	1 English	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
Restrictions:	No restrictions		

SUMMARY

Sydney Lesser served in the 639th Automatic Weapons Anti-aircraft Battalion of the United States Army during World War II, in Europe. He arrived at Buchenwald Concentration camp in April 1945, several days after the concentration camp was liberated. Sydney describes what he found there and depicts surviving inmates as "walking skeletons". He describes graphically the excavation of a mass grave--where thousands of Jews were buried-- by German civilians. He relates an anecdote, told to him by his interpreter, about a Jew who intervened when Polish and Russian prisoners brutally beat the Camp *Commandant*, insisting that the man be kept alive. Sydney Lesser later served as Military Governor in the area. He encountered German civilians who freely admitted some knowledge of atrocities, yet maintained allegiance to Hitler.

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SUBJECT HEADINGS

World War, 1939 - 1945 -- Personal narratives, American
World War, 1939 - 1945 -- Concentration camps -- Liberation
Concentration Camps - Germany -- Buchenwald - Liberation
Atrocities
Germans -- attitude towards Adolf Hitler