

Rough transcript of interview by the Surviving Generations of the Holocaust on July 14, 1995, at a reunion in Seattle 50 years after the liberation of Dachau

Duties when entered war?

I had a number of different duties, but eventually I volunteered for the I&R platoon, intelligence and reconnaissance.

Why did you volunteer for that?

The platoon was ambushed and lost half their men, so the next day I volunteered for the platoon. They were good friends of mine. I was for the most part a scout. Myself and another fellow, another scout on the point Jeep, if we came to a village or a clump of woods, then the two of us walked in by ourselves, and if we were still walking we waved the rest of them in. That's what a scout does.

Event that sticks out in your mind?

We were coming out of the woods around the little bend, we were fired on. It was a small village — I wouldn't remember the name of the town, it was just a village — and a couple of us went in and cleared the first few houses. There were only 24 men in the whole platoon, and we never operated full strength. I was in the big squad: That was three Jeeps and 12 men, so it isn't like you could fight a whole war yourself. In that incident, there were three of us that went in; we assaulted the town. *[Smiles.]* And when we cleared the first few houses in town, we waved the rest of the squad in. I think we got about 180 prisoners out of there. It was interesting. All German soldiers.

Where were the townspeople?

They'd just hide. And that day they were hiding. They'd try to stay away from the action, I think, as anybody would. The soldiers are fighting it out.

Do you know the general area?

I recollect it was probably around 30-35 miles from Dachau. We were close to Dachau at that point.

Gathered these soldiers, officers also?

We were in a big rush, yes. We broke up their weapons and told them to walk back on the road because the main troops were coming behind us. We were point, you know. What are we going to do with 187 prisoners or whatever it was.

Any of those prisoners stand out in your mind?

All prisoners looked alike to me. We didn't have time to, you know... No reason I wanted to remember them, to tell you the truth.

What was your most memorable experience?

The actual race to Dachau. We were supposed to contact the tail end of the 20th Armored, and the liaison between the Armored and the regular infantry, who were actually in 2½-ton trucks going like crazy to get there, and we contacted the tail end of the 20th Armored and they were taking a different road so we ended up without any armor in front of us at all. At one point we actually cut through a German convoy and it all happened so fast that the Germans just ran off the road. We weren't supposed to be there. At one point going through another little village, a German soldier behind a bush shot a Panzerfaust — that's a German bazooka, not as good as ours. Looked like a bull head of TNT or explosive of some kind. And he shot it at us, blew us out of the Jeep, the Jeep I was in. My buddy Herman ... I reached down —my pants were sticking to my leg — and I reached down to pull this little sliver out and he says, *You got hit!* And I said, *No, no, it's no big deal*, and I jumped in the Jeep and I was laughing because I had cut myself shaving that morning and that was worse than this was. Fortunately, that's the only thing that ever hit me in the war.

We finally got to Dachau after a few little skirmishes and at the outskirts of town we were pinned down because as it turns out Dachau was the only concentration camp that had to be fought for. The others were walkovers; the Germans left. At that point we were pinned down in a ditch alongside a house and an American tank came over a little hill, little rise and the gun came down on us, the cannon or whatever it was on the front and I said, *Uh-oh*. Big mistake. It was a captured American tank that the Germans were using. Fortunately, one of our tank destroyers caught up with us at that instant and had a big 90mm cannon on the front and blew the tank away, which was a fairly lucky piece of work for us that day. At that point we were at Dachau.

We were kind of busy because that house we were next to had 15, 20 Germans in it we didn't even know about. We got them out. Got in some trouble with some snipers. We were kind of busy. At that point also the rest of the troops had come up to us and they were going straight into the camp. We were on the outside of the camp. We actually never got a chance to get a good look at the camp, mainly because since we were an advance group, we have to find the enemy and tell headquarters where they are. That was our job.

So we were very quickly shuttled out to another mission. We were getting ready to go to Munich. I think Dachau was the 29th and we took Munich either the next day or the day after, it's not too clear. We proceeded to a little place outside, before Munich, and it was at that point we met with some counterintelligence guys who were living in Munich; they were informers of ours.

They looked German to me; they were living there a long time. I didn't know if they were Americans or Germans working for us; I never got that clear. But they knew where Hitler's

house was in Munich, so they took a bunch of us and we went with them. The town had not been taken yet, and we did not know that some of the citizens in Munich did not want the town to be bombed, didn't want any more damage, so they were working on an agreement to let us come in. Most of the Germans except for some snipers were still in Munich. So when we went in with these two fellas, most of the bridges were blown, we went up the steps—like on the Capitol steps in Washington, D.C.—and we had to go up the steps and go across a footbridge that was just wide enough for the Jeeps to get across the river and they took us to Hitler's house.

We banged on the door, and he had an English housekeeper, tall English lady who called us ruffians, and got us a little bit upset. We didn't like the way she was talking; she talked like we were the bad guys. She couldn't understand why we were after Hitler. It was very strange. We went there primarily to see if there was any information we could get, for intelligence. I ran into a bedroom, I didn't know it was his—Hitler's. I pulled all the drawers, everything was cleaned out. I opened the closet, it was clean; I saw something dark on an upper shelf so I pulled over a chair, climbed up and grabbed this *thing*. [*Holds up a flat, torn circular black item and smiles.*] Didn't look like that originally. I pulled it out and I looked inside and I saw "A.H." Now I was really mad having just gone to Dachau, so I threw it on the floor and jumped on it. This is the result. It's not an opera hat; it's not supposed to fold. It's a top hat. I took it with me as a souvenir. It ended up in the bottom of my duffel bag until I got back home and now it's been laying in the basement for 50 years. And that's what it looks like now.

Just after the war was over, division headquarters sent down a photographer, took this picture [*Holds up a picture of a man holding a comb "mustache" under his nose and wearing a top hat.*] and that picture is in the division history book. They forgot to caption it so a lot of guys didn't know what it was doing in there. That's me with the top hat and comb.

One of the guys was hysterical when he walked into Hitler's bedroom. Herman, one of the guys in our platoon. He thought it was very funny because apparently I was strutting around like Charlie Chaplin in "The Great Dictator." He sent me a letter describing this to me; I don't remember this at all, but I believe Herman. I guess you're always under a little pressure under those circumstances and you do funny things.

How long did you stay in the house?

We were there a short time. We were pretty close to the end of the war by that time. In a day or two we were at Berchtesgaden, Eagle's Nest.

When you entered that house did you know what was going on outside of your little world? Did you know where Hitler was or what happened to him?

I didn't know anything about Hitler. We didn't get the news real quick. We didn't know where Hitler was or what he was doing. We assumed he was probably in Berlin or someplace else. The only thing we were certain of was he wasn't in Munich. Learned what happened to him quite a while afterward.

Anything you'd like to add to this interview?

Only that after Dachau, I'm glad I was there because any little bit that I could have done or anybody could do in a situation like that should be done — and I'm glad you're doing this — because there are an awful lot of people that are trying to change history and say it never happened.

I had a conversation with a guy that I was ready to punch out in a situation like that. He said that the concentration camps were a lie, never happened, it's all propaganda, they filmed it. I said, "You're out of your mind, I was there and don't try to pull that stuff on me." Only I didn't use those words.

It's important because it's going to happen again. It's almost happening now everywhere else, Bosnia and so forth. I don't know why people do these things to each other but nobody should ever forget these things.

What do you want students to learn from you?

To learn their real history well, never forget it and don't repeat it.

After interview there are closeup shots of the inside of the top hat with the embroidered initials AH and a German eagle insignia. Marowitz displays the hat and continues talking for a couple of minutes but there is no audio with the remaining video.