

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:14,870

2
00:00:14,870 --> 00:00:15,530
We're rolling.

3
00:00:15,530 --> 00:00:19,710

4
00:00:19,710 --> 00:00:24,180
So tell me where
you were at the time

5
00:00:24,180 --> 00:00:28,500
that you came across victims
in concentration camps.

6
00:00:28,500 --> 00:00:32,580
Just describe to me the
day and what you saw.

7
00:00:32,580 --> 00:00:39,450
It was late April, early May.

8
00:00:39,450 --> 00:00:41,430
We weren't too sure
of the exact dates,

9
00:00:41,430 --> 00:00:44,310
but I know it was after
the 28th of April.

10
00:00:44,310 --> 00:00:46,080
And was about the 1st of May.

11
00:00:46,080 --> 00:00:51,870
And this was after we had
left Straubing, Germany.

12
00:00:51,870 --> 00:00:55,770
And probably somewhere

around Wels, Austria.

13
00:00:55,770 --> 00:00:59,160
In that particular area
is where we first saw--

14
00:00:59,160 --> 00:01:03,750
where I first saw
men was coming out

15
00:01:03,750 --> 00:01:08,040
of the prison camps,
concentration camps.

16
00:01:08,040 --> 00:01:09,590
What were you doing there?

17
00:01:09,590 --> 00:01:11,640
Tell me exactly.

18
00:01:11,640 --> 00:01:12,630
You were--

19
00:01:12,630 --> 00:01:17,310
Yes, where I was, we were
the 761st Tank Battalion,

20
00:01:17,310 --> 00:01:21,660
was assigned at that
time the 71st Division.

21
00:01:21,660 --> 00:01:23,880
And my particular
assignment at the time

22
00:01:23,880 --> 00:01:27,750
was a liaison officer
between my company

23
00:01:27,750 --> 00:01:30,540
and the regimental headquarters.

24

00:01:30,540 --> 00:01:33,060
So I wasn't with the
immediate front line.

25
00:01:33,060 --> 00:01:36,600
I was like in between the
front line and the regiment.

26
00:01:36,600 --> 00:01:40,740
So as the troops went ahead,
and I would be used as a--

27
00:01:40,740 --> 00:01:42,960
back in those days, you'd
call it liaison officers.

28
00:01:42,960 --> 00:01:47,850
Is a relatively high-paid
messenger in those days.

29
00:01:47,850 --> 00:01:51,990
Take messages from the front
line back to the regiment.

30
00:01:51,990 --> 00:01:54,210
And from the regiment
back to the front line,

31
00:01:54,210 --> 00:01:56,220
telling them what was going on.

32
00:01:56,220 --> 00:02:00,790
So that was my assignment
at that particular time.

33
00:02:00,790 --> 00:02:06,180
So now just describe to me
how you were going along

34
00:02:06,180 --> 00:02:07,660
and what you saw.

35
00:02:07,660 --> 00:02:08,160

All right.

36

00:02:08,160 --> 00:02:16,950

We had been alerted at that time
that the frontline troops had

37

00:02:16,950 --> 00:02:19,380

gone through some prison
camps and that there

38

00:02:19,380 --> 00:02:25,140

were a lot of prisoners
who had been released.

39

00:02:25,140 --> 00:02:27,210

And we were warned,
particularly,

40

00:02:27,210 --> 00:02:28,950

about feeding them.

41

00:02:28,950 --> 00:02:30,630

Said, be careful when
they come on out.

42

00:02:30,630 --> 00:02:33,180

So as we proceed down the road--

43

00:02:33,180 --> 00:02:36,450

and this happens
for days and days--

44

00:02:36,450 --> 00:02:39,030

we would see them coming
with the striped uniform.

45

00:02:39,030 --> 00:02:44,820

They were all real skinny,
emaciated, and looked

46

00:02:44,820 --> 00:02:45,820

like they were starving.

47

00:02:45,820 --> 00:02:47,850

So we they were warned
not to give them

48

00:02:47,850 --> 00:02:51,060

anything to eat because all
we had was those K rations.

49

00:02:51,060 --> 00:02:52,560

They were highly concentrated.

50

00:02:52,560 --> 00:02:55,770

And if they hate those
things, it might kill them.

51

00:02:55,770 --> 00:02:58,560

And all observed, they come
in, and it was just dragging,

52

00:02:58,560 --> 00:02:59,950

coming in any way they could.

53

00:02:59,950 --> 00:03:04,680

And they were hollering either
American or comrade, something

54

00:03:04,680 --> 00:03:05,710

like that.

55

00:03:05,710 --> 00:03:07,830

And as they approached
us, and then we'd

56

00:03:07,830 --> 00:03:10,020

more or less wave at them.

57

00:03:10,020 --> 00:03:12,990

And then make sure they got
out, wouldn't run over them,

58

00:03:12,990 --> 00:03:15,840

and told them, keep

on moving to the rear.

59

00:03:15,840 --> 00:03:18,210

Because they were coming
from the front, and we're

60

00:03:18,210 --> 00:03:22,040

trying to move them
to the rear area.

61

00:03:22,040 --> 00:03:25,280

So they were coming
towards you from where?

62

00:03:25,280 --> 00:03:28,760

From the camps that
were off the main road.

63

00:03:28,760 --> 00:03:32,330

We were told that there were
a lot of smaller camps there

64

00:03:32,330 --> 00:03:35,960

in Austria, right at the
Austrian-German border

65

00:03:35,960 --> 00:03:37,650

around that particular area.

66

00:03:37,650 --> 00:03:42,230

But you could see them all
coming from the camp trying

67

00:03:42,230 --> 00:03:44,660

to, I guess, get
back to the rear area

68

00:03:44,660 --> 00:03:45,830

or wherever they could get.

69

00:03:45,830 --> 00:03:49,530

Because the Germans who had
been chased out of the camp

70

00:03:49,530 --> 00:03:52,100
then more or less left
them on their own.

71

00:03:52,100 --> 00:03:55,275
And soon as they
were liberated, they

72

00:03:55,275 --> 00:03:56,900
started heading for
the road and trying

73

00:03:56,900 --> 00:04:00,320
to go home, whichever
direction that was.

74

00:04:00,320 --> 00:04:03,220
They wanted to get away
from the fighting, at least.

75

00:04:03,220 --> 00:04:06,432
And so what did they do?

76

00:04:06,432 --> 00:04:07,920
Were they walking along this?

77

00:04:07,920 --> 00:04:12,690
Yeah, they were walking around
like zombies or whatnot.

78

00:04:12,690 --> 00:04:15,340
I guess they really didn't
know what direction.

79

00:04:15,340 --> 00:04:18,480
They knew that if we were going
forward, it's best for them

80

00:04:18,480 --> 00:04:19,472
to go back.

81

00:04:19,472 --> 00:04:21,180
Because they didn't
know where they were.

82
00:04:21,180 --> 00:04:25,650
I guess they had no idea of what
city they may have been near

83
00:04:25,650 --> 00:04:26,940
or whatever.

84
00:04:26,940 --> 00:04:28,830
All they knew, they
were getting away,

85
00:04:28,830 --> 00:04:34,330
and they were free, and
were headed on to free area.

86
00:04:34,330 --> 00:04:36,940
Did you talk to any of them?

87
00:04:36,940 --> 00:04:40,810
No, I guess they--

88
00:04:40,810 --> 00:04:43,720
at that time, we had
no training in German

89
00:04:43,720 --> 00:04:45,190
or any other language.

90
00:04:45,190 --> 00:04:47,680
But all my little
experience at that time

91
00:04:47,680 --> 00:04:50,300
had been strictly
in the combat zone.

92
00:04:50,300 --> 00:04:53,355
So we had no language training.

93

00:04:53,355 --> 00:04:54,730

And I like to say,
all they could

94

00:04:54,730 --> 00:04:58,630

say was American or comrade.

95

00:04:58,630 --> 00:05:00,280

And you'd just wave at them.

96

00:05:00,280 --> 00:05:01,840

And you know,
that's about all you

97

00:05:01,840 --> 00:05:04,635

could do was give them
a smile and just wave.

98

00:05:04,635 --> 00:05:05,260

And that's all.

99

00:05:05,260 --> 00:05:06,718

That was the extent
of our contact.

100

00:05:06,718 --> 00:05:09,220

Because when I saw them,
we were on the move.

101

00:05:09,220 --> 00:05:11,920

It was no stopping to talk.

102

00:05:11,920 --> 00:05:13,360

We were just going to--

103

00:05:13,360 --> 00:05:15,550

moving on ahead.

104

00:05:15,550 --> 00:05:18,620

And what condition were they in?

105

00:05:18,620 --> 00:05:23,000
Oh, they were all just
skin and bones, and beards,

106
00:05:23,000 --> 00:05:27,740
and you know, they're
dirty and extremely weak.

107
00:05:27,740 --> 00:05:29,540
Many of them, you
know, they just--

108
00:05:29,540 --> 00:05:31,500
they couldn't run or
anything like that.

109
00:05:31,500 --> 00:05:35,060
They were just-- you could see
that they could barely walk.

110
00:05:35,060 --> 00:05:39,100
They were just in
bad, bad shape.

111
00:05:39,100 --> 00:05:43,220
Did you and your friends
who were with you--

112
00:05:43,220 --> 00:05:44,790
did you talk about it?

113
00:05:44,790 --> 00:05:48,680
What kinds of things
did you talk about,

114
00:05:48,680 --> 00:05:50,250
about having seen that?

115
00:05:50,250 --> 00:05:54,770
Well, we in my position,
we were really more

116
00:05:54,770 --> 00:05:59,558

concerned of making sure that
these GIs wouldn't feed them,

117
00:05:59,558 --> 00:06:00,350
more than anything.

118
00:06:00,350 --> 00:06:01,910
Because they had been warned.

119
00:06:01,910 --> 00:06:04,430
And knowing how the
American soldiers were,

120
00:06:04,430 --> 00:06:07,070
it's pretty hard,
with all the stuff

121
00:06:07,070 --> 00:06:09,440
we had, not to give
them something.

122
00:06:09,440 --> 00:06:11,240
And some of them did feed them.

123
00:06:11,240 --> 00:06:14,570
But that was-- in my position,
that was the hardest thing.

124
00:06:14,570 --> 00:06:18,450
And we talked about
how bad they looked.

125
00:06:18,450 --> 00:06:20,300
We talked about
that and wondered.

126
00:06:20,300 --> 00:06:24,440
We didn't know too much
about all the camps

127
00:06:24,440 --> 00:06:27,020
that had been
liberated, or really,

128
00:06:27,020 --> 00:06:32,910
at that time, all the atrocities
that had gone on in the camp.

129
00:06:32,910 --> 00:06:34,800
In fact, they were only men.

130
00:06:34,800 --> 00:06:38,220
Basically all we saw
were man in this camp.

131
00:06:38,220 --> 00:06:42,960
I can't recall seeing
any children or women

132
00:06:42,960 --> 00:06:44,730
at that particular time.

133
00:06:44,730 --> 00:06:46,350
That's all I saw were men.

134
00:06:46,350 --> 00:06:49,600

135
00:06:49,600 --> 00:06:52,020
Did anyone give them
cigarettes or anything?

136
00:06:52,020 --> 00:06:54,120
No, no.

137
00:06:54,120 --> 00:06:54,620
No way.

138
00:06:54,620 --> 00:06:57,560
And who did you think they were?

139
00:06:57,560 --> 00:07:00,100
When they told you not to
feed them, they didn't?

140

00:07:00,100 --> 00:07:03,280

We knew that they
were prisoners--

141

00:07:03,280 --> 00:07:06,940

we thought they were
just regular Polish,

142

00:07:06,940 --> 00:07:12,370

or German, or Jewish-Polish,
or Jewish prisoners.

143

00:07:12,370 --> 00:07:15,190

And we knew what they were.

144

00:07:15,190 --> 00:07:19,095

But see, by being on the move,
there was no standing around.

145

00:07:19,095 --> 00:07:20,560

That's the main thing.

146

00:07:20,560 --> 00:07:23,590

We were concerned about
not hurting any of them

147

00:07:23,590 --> 00:07:25,420

or letting them have
them hurt themselves.

148

00:07:25,420 --> 00:07:28,870

Because in many cases, you
know, they came so close

149

00:07:28,870 --> 00:07:32,200

to the vehicles, it
wouldn't have taken too much

150

00:07:32,200 --> 00:07:35,860

for some of them to fall and
get run over and whatnot.

151

00:07:35,860 --> 00:07:38,590

I imagine people
gave them cigarettes

152

00:07:38,590 --> 00:07:40,180

if they asked for any.

153

00:07:40,180 --> 00:07:42,520

But I don't think they--

154

00:07:42,520 --> 00:07:45,820

didn't look to me that they
were in a begging-type mood.

155

00:07:45,820 --> 00:07:49,180

I think the main thing
[INAUDIBLE],, and their freedom,

156

00:07:49,180 --> 00:07:52,240

and getting on down
to some shelter,

157

00:07:52,240 --> 00:07:56,885

or away, at least,
from that prison camp.

158

00:07:56,885 --> 00:07:59,000

Did they look happy?

159

00:07:59,000 --> 00:08:01,130

No.

160

00:08:01,130 --> 00:08:04,310

You mean about happy
about getting out?

161

00:08:04,310 --> 00:08:06,410

It couldn't be
reflected on their face.

162

00:08:06,410 --> 00:08:11,540

When they spoke, they spoke, you
know, happy, glad you're here.

163
00:08:11,540 --> 00:08:15,830
But you could see where it
was pretty hard for them

164
00:08:15,830 --> 00:08:16,970
to really smile.

165
00:08:16,970 --> 00:08:19,020
No laughing or
anything like that.

166
00:08:19,020 --> 00:08:22,490
I guess there were some
smiles in the bunch.

167
00:08:22,490 --> 00:08:25,000
But they had a real solemn look.

168
00:08:25,000 --> 00:08:29,190
You could see that they
were glad to be away.

169
00:08:29,190 --> 00:08:32,240
But they were not in
a position to just

170
00:08:32,240 --> 00:08:34,520
be smiling like they
had won a football game

171
00:08:34,520 --> 00:08:37,120
or anything like that.

172
00:08:37,120 --> 00:08:40,890
Tell me-- you told Diana
you were at a DP camp later.

173
00:08:40,890 --> 00:08:42,929
Tell me about that.

174
00:08:42,929 --> 00:08:48,840

Well, about a year
after the war was over,

175
00:08:48,840 --> 00:08:53,200
I was stationed in Auerbach,
Germany, which was not

176
00:08:53,200 --> 00:08:58,240
too far from Nuremberg, between
Nuremberg and what it's called?

177
00:08:58,240 --> 00:09:00,050
Grafenwohr.

178
00:09:00,050 --> 00:09:03,980
And I was commandant of a
Polish displaced persons camp.

179
00:09:03,980 --> 00:09:06,710
It was run by UNRRA.

180
00:09:06,710 --> 00:09:10,100
UNRRA, they were civilians.

181
00:09:10,100 --> 00:09:12,290
They did the administration.

182
00:09:12,290 --> 00:09:16,820
And I was there
with one sergeant.

183
00:09:16,820 --> 00:09:23,500
We had about 15 German police.

184
00:09:23,500 --> 00:09:27,850
And then there were about
1,500 Polish displaced persons

185
00:09:27,850 --> 00:09:29,020
in the camp.

186
00:09:29,020 --> 00:09:33,520

They had their own, I guess,
commanders and whatnot

187
00:09:33,520 --> 00:09:35,320
within the camp.

188
00:09:35,320 --> 00:09:38,710
My responsibility was more or
less to see that they were fed

189
00:09:38,710 --> 00:09:42,130
and that the camp
was kept up clean.

190
00:09:42,130 --> 00:09:46,180
They had to make almost
daily inspections.

191
00:09:46,180 --> 00:09:48,970
And went through, just make
sure everything was all right.

192
00:09:48,970 --> 00:09:50,920
And to keep down a
lot of complaints.

193
00:09:50,920 --> 00:09:54,880
Because at that particular
time, the people in the city

194
00:09:54,880 --> 00:09:58,900
were complaining about some
of the displaced persons

195
00:09:58,900 --> 00:10:02,500
coming into town
and doing things.

196
00:10:02,500 --> 00:10:04,210
Of course, naturally,
they denied it,

197
00:10:04,210 --> 00:10:05,110

and they'd come back.

198
00:10:05,110 --> 00:10:10,120
And to keep peace between
the German guards, who

199
00:10:10,120 --> 00:10:12,280
had the responsibility.

200
00:10:12,280 --> 00:10:14,410
These weren't all
German soldiers.

201
00:10:14,410 --> 00:10:17,500
But I don't know if they
were civilians that were

202
00:10:17,500 --> 00:10:19,150
acting as guards for the camp.

203
00:10:19,150 --> 00:10:23,460

204
00:10:23,460 --> 00:10:25,920
I might say, these
were families, too.

205
00:10:25,920 --> 00:10:28,165
Now, that was family situation.

206
00:10:28,165 --> 00:10:30,040
And they were all--
where they were stationed

207
00:10:30,040 --> 00:10:34,830
were all German army barracks.

208
00:10:34,830 --> 00:10:38,893
And you had more or less like
husband, wife, and children,

209
00:10:38,893 --> 00:10:39,435

all together.

210
00:10:39,435 --> 00:10:52,380

211
00:10:52,380 --> 00:10:53,940
We're just running out.

212
00:10:53,940 --> 00:10:55,170
I think we have enough.

213
00:10:55,170 --> 00:10:56,070
But let me ask you.

214
00:10:56,070 --> 00:10:58,470
Did you ever
actually-- we're going

215
00:10:58,470 --> 00:11:02,810
quiet for 30 seconds
and record room tone.

216
00:11:02,810 --> 00:11:06,000