

We're rolling.

OK.

Five seconds please.

Yeah, well, you asked me about names. At one time or other I used to know names but I forgot. It's already 50 years or so or almost 50 years since that time. 45-- let's see, it's--

That's OK.

To be more accurate, 44 years only from this wartime experience. Maybe 48 years.

So the tank was in the basement of a home you think?

That's what I remember, yes.

Do you remember what the experiments were to do?

The effects of cold-- the effects of cold temperature on human bodies. They did it for the purpose of their army in Russia. What happened if a pilot was shot down into freezing water or into the snow and how to survive him-- how to revive him.

So they tried all kinds of different techniques, including taking these prisoners that they immersed in cold water and to revive them. Used women. Paired them up women, you know, who were not in normal condition.

What do you mean?

Just the contact with women. You know, females, gypsy women or whatever.

What do you mean by not in normal condition?

Who were normal, you know? Not in a cold condition. But pair them up, a frozen man with a regular woman, put them together and to have sexual contact in order to revive the man. Well anyway, they experimented and see whether that would help or how long it would take.

Did you read a lot of the documents that the Nazis produced about this experiment?

No, I did not read any such documents really. I didn't get to do that. Not during the war and not after the war. Even what I have with me I may have read some of it and forgot already. It's so long ago. For instance, looking through this here, I know this-- leafing through the pages I have some notations in my handwriting in pencil that I passed on to somebody to-- pointed it out to them, so I must have read it but I don't remember it anymore.

When you were, you know, taken to be on these work details and when you were in Dachau--

Yeah.

--what incident most sticks in your mind of all of the marches and the work details?

The worst one was the day I was taken to this quarry, that pit to dig. It was very frightening the way these guards behaved, shouting and threatening all the time with guns ready to shoot. We had to move on. Some had these vicious dogs with them. And this was just the entire atmosphere that they created, the frightening atmosphere. That was one of the worst I remember.

What was a typical day like in Dachau?

Well, what can I say? You had to get up early in the morning and get ready for that parade ground, march out there, come back, get some breakfast, which was tea with some bread, and then put to work, whatever it was. If there was no snow to shovel or whatever, just march up and down and double.

We had to pull the heavy equipment-- a roller, a very heavy roller. I think it was made out of concrete. In this book here there's a picture of it. Basically that's what it was. And then as the day passed, we had to-- let's see, I don't even remember where the-- I guess before we got some supper we went again to the parade ground to be counted and stand there for hours on end in the cold weather.

Sometimes it-- what was worse was if it was freezing rain in wet weather. And that was in wintertime, but I understand in summertime it was even worse to be in the heat. I was not in the summertime there but from what I heard it was even worse.

You know, you said you that you ate the herring, the salted herring.

Yes.

Did that make you more thirsty? And did you get enough water?

I suppose it must have gotten thirsty. Drink the tea. Mm-hmm.

Could you drink water any time you wanted?

No, when we were out in the open in the parade, no, we couldn't step out to get a drink of water, no. We had to wait till we-- or we couldn't even relieve ourselves when we were on a detail. Some men who had a problem of bladder control, they wet themselves, and if the Nazis saw the puddle from the urine, they-- well, they beat up the prisoner.

What were the sanitary conditions?

Well, it was, I would say, not the worst. Well, you know, I told you I came from-- in Vienna we lived in poor conditions. People when they hear about Vienna they all think it's a beautiful town. It looks beautiful, but Vienna was full of fleas and bedbugs, and sanitary conditions in Vienna were very bad.

For instance, many of these old apartment buildings, they didn't have any running water in each apartment. They had maybe one faucet in the hallway. It was not a clean setting. And I must say in Dachau it was cleaner. There were no bedbugs. There were no fleas. Of course, occasionally they found some lice and that was only beneficial to us. But they tried to keep it clean.

It was not where we slept-- I think we slept on straw-- on burlap sacks that were stuffed with straw. We had to keep our mess kits meticulously clean. We got some soap for cleaning it for ourself and the utensils.

You know, just before I came to Dachau in civilian life, not just were already in Austria and Vienna, but I developed some bad rash and eczema all over my body. Terrible. I had to be hospitalized.

They couldn't even cure me. I was discharged because the Nazis closed down that hospital. I suffered quite a bit. And the minute I came to Dachau, my problems suddenly disappeared. It was a dermatol--

Dermatology?

Yeah. Dermatology, whatever. Strange, but-- yeah, you see, I was always underweight in civilian life, and believe it or not, eating all this herring I managed to put on some weight.

In Dachau?

Yeah. Well, that doesn't-- it only tells you what poor conditions I lived in--

At home.

--at home. And maybe because of my tough life in civilian life I was preconditioned for being able to survive these harsh circumstances.

What were the barracks like?

Ooh, there were bunk beds. I think two tiers or three tiers I believe. And I always preferred to be on the top tier.

Why?

Why? Well, in case someone-- if I would be on the lower tier, above me would be an inmate who had-- can go to the bathroom any time and urinate and it would drip on you. Something of that sort. They had some windows in the barracks on higher level and I got a little more-- that stayed open and I got a little more fresh this way. I mean, that's the way I preferred it.

How many men slept in a bunk?

Well, one man to each-- I think not together. Separate, but they were close together, you know? As a matter of fact, I think when I was on the troopships during the war, it was even more crowded and worse than bunks on troopships.

How did you keep warm enough?

Well, I don't know. It's just we got some blanket, but we never-- we were always exposed to cold. Got used to it. Acclimatized. If you sit here long enough, you get used to this warm condition. You don't think so?

I'm not sure about that. Were you assigned bunks, or could you sleep where you wanted to sleep?

That I don't remember. Most likely we were assigned.

Did you have Kapos? Did you have Kapos, the overseers that were prisoners?

Oh, Kapos. Yeah, of course.

Do you remember yours?

Yes. And I told you a couple of them were very nice. Others were very mean. And one of them was this Tutas, who was mean. And amazingly, he spoke a beautiful language.

Beautiful language?

Yeah, his English-- German was excellent. There was another one I forgot the name. He was-- people feared him quite a bit. But when he shouted and spoke, his German was just beautiful. Yeah.

Shouted and spoke in beautiful German?

Yeah, educated. But he was brutal.

What do he do? This was the Titus?

Well, shout and beat and-- mm-hmm.

What kind of privileges did the Kapos have?

Privileges the Kapos--

Privileges, yeah. What kind of--

Oh, I don't really know. Maybe they got a little better food or more food. I would say that would be basically the case.

Did they demand favors from--

No, how could we?

No, did they demand favors from--

Did they demand favors?

--from the people they rule over?

No, no, we couldn't offer them anything. No.

You know how you said you got your butter and lemon juice?

Lemons.

Yeah, butter and lemons.

Yeah.

How did you do that? Did you have any-- you didn't have any money did you?

Yes. We were permitted to receive some money from home. You see those receipts on top there?

These?

These are money order receipts. Yeah, I think 7 and 1/2 marks per, I don't know, month or whatever. 15 marks. 15 marks per month I guess.

But I thought you said that Jews weren't allowed to buy at this store?

Hmm?

I thought you said Jews weren't allowed to buy at this store?

No, I may have asked an Aryan prisoner to get it for me.

Did it take all your money? Were the things in the canteen expensive?

We are way overpriced, yeah. They sold also gloves or I don't know what other items. Not much. Maybe a comb or-- I don't know.

Did you ever see any small children in Dachau?

Small children? No, but I remember, and even in that book it's told, the impression to when we were standing on the campground for being counted and we could hear from distance children's voices and it was so exciting to hear it. But that's all I know about children. Also I knew those children shouting, laughing, they were not-- they were the children of the tormentors. But still, it was nice to hear children.

Did you witness public executions?

No. Not by the Germans and not by the Americans.

What about extermination facilities?

Extermination facilities? Well, I saw them, but I didn't see them being used, you know, the ovens. Also in the shower rooms, I mean, they actually could be used as exterminating facility. From the shower heads they could have poison gas released.

And I guess it was done at times, but I didn't see otherwise. I mean, I saw this oven that I was told was a crematoria, but I didn't see them in use. May have used them at other times. Not when I was there. Certainly afterwards, after my time during the war.

Did you ever have any reason to see SS quarters like preparing or serving the SS meals or anything?

No.

How about the SS torture chambers?

No, I didn't see any of that.

What do you recall about the commandant? Anything?

No, he was-- when he appeared in Dachau, people worried, you know? But they had some high officials come and I am almost sure I saw Heinrich Himmler once. I mean, from what I would recall but you know, its vague really. I never met Heinrich Himmler, but when I saw pictures afterwards and reports of Heinrich, I am almost sure I saw him without knowing at that time who he was except some high SS man.

Do you know what he was doing in the camp at that time?

No, they just came. Occasionally I saw them. And whenever some such groups came, for some reason we got a little better food. Maybe they had with them some foreign dignitaries too. I didn't know. So I had to make it appear to be not as terrible as it really was.

What did you talk about with other prisoners?

That I don't remember. Mostly what I tried to find out what was going on on the outside about news from the outside. What did they hear? News, underground news. What is going to happen? Have you heard something? You know, did you talk about others when they had to tell about their chances for getting a visa somewhere. That we talked about, and how soon and whatever.

Were there any jokes that you recall?

Jokes? No. It's too long ago, you know? Perhaps I did know some. Didn't stay in my memory.

How did prisoners treat each other? How did prisoners treat each other?

Well, as I said, amazingly some behaved like beasts. And what I found so interesting that people coming from a better background, I mean with higher education or better social level, they were-- some of them were terrible. And then ordinary people, they were wonderful.

That I observed even during-- in my army career. The nicest people I remember were some hillbillies among soldiers. The finest characters, hillbillies. But that's talking about the army, and that was no different.

And for instance, army buddy-- at one time when I had to share a tent with him, with one of these hillbillies, he couldn't even read and write very well. I had to read to him the letters he received from his wife back in Kentucky. Well, whenever he received a package, he would never open it until I came and I was in the tent and open it in front of me and offered me something.

Or I remember one time we were on the march all dirty, sweaty, and when we were ready to go to sleep that night in the pup tent, he had disappeared. He went to find a stream to wash his feet. He said he didn't want to offend me with his odor. Others, educated fellows, they were not that considerate, not that nice. That was the same true among these prisoners in Dachau.

Were there any color? Any bright spots? Was there any color in Dachau? Any bright spots?

No, except the nice weather some day. That was a bright spot maybe. Some good news from home, that was bright spot. What else? Some rumors of-- they were mostly wrong rumors, but better conditions.

Were there any expressions of humor? Any expressions of humor?

Not that I remember. Well--

Do you-- go ahead.

We were talking about this Tutas, yeah? He was mean. And well, I mean, it's a joke. We used to say oh, Tutas, weh. Oh, it does hurt when Tutas came around. Tutas weh, you know? In German language it means, oh, does it hurt when he is around? Oh, Tutas-- oh, it hurt. Es tut weh. Well, that's one little joke.

Do you recall any camp theaters?

Theater? No.

Singing?

Well, maybe among ourselves. I don't remember. I think so. There was some entertainment. Yeah.

Did the guards ever force you to sing when you were on your way to a work detail?

Did they force us--

To sing on the way to a work detail?

Oh, I think so, yeah. Marching songs or something. But now that you mention, but it's very vague in my memory now.

Do you recall any sexual encounters between inmates?

Sexual encounters?

Encounters between inmates?

No, except what I told you in the shower room.