

## **RG-50.493.0029**

### **Summary**

Francis Derkum was born in Manila, Philippines. His father was Superintendent of Schools for the Federal Government. His mother was a high school teacher. He had 3 older brothers. Lived there till he was 9 years old. Moved to Los Angeles till high school. Studied in LA City College. Drafted in army in 1942. Stayed in the army till 1946. Mostly in the tanks. Trained in United States for 2.5 years. Went overseas in 1945. Went to England, then France. From there went to Austria. Derkum was communications sergeant. Did not know of concentration camps then. Members of the 42<sup>nd</sup> infantry division joined them (27<sup>th</sup> Tank division) near Danube river. Reached a German town around 10 o'clock in the morning. Struggle with German snipers shooting from a tower. Saw barracks and compounds. 40 box cars with roughly 80 dead in each were being taken to the crematorium. People came out when guards were shot. One person came up to Derkum. He was extremely thin around 80 pounds. He saw Derkum eating and asked for food. Derkum gave him a can of food. Red cross workers were there. Staff officers took pictures of the box cars. Some American soldiers spoke Polish communicated with the victims. There were more than 100 Polish priests in the camp. Next morning went to Munich, Germany. People throwing roses on them. There was scattered resistance. On May 1 headed towards Salzburg, Austria. They were going to Yugoslavia, but then asked not to on Truman's orders.

Red cross was following the tanks. Parts of 45<sup>th</sup> infantry division came from another direction. Stayed in Austria for a long time. Then back to France and then United States. Supposed to go Pacific. On return the atom bombs were dropped and war was over. After he came back, he started a small manufacturing company. Shows book with around 36 pictures at the end.