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Summary

Theodore Fromes was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota and was raised Jewish in Wisconsin by his grandparents. He was in the American military when he witnessed Dachau. Fromes joined the armed forces when he was eighteen in 1941. In 1944 he was sent to the Battle of the Bulge as a tank commander and then travelled to Munich, Germany in May 1945 just before the end of the war. When he arrived in his tank he saw many older people wandering the streets asking for food. Since the army had told him nothing about the Holocaust or the camp at Dachau, he did not know who these people were. He did give them food, however, which he admitted afterward, may not have been a good idea given their condition. He was then sent to the camp at Dachau where he witnessed more people looking for food and bodies piled up on the grounds and in boxcars. He did not personally witness the gas chambers. What he saw made him sick. His assistant tank driver, an American Indian, explained to him about persecution. He admitted that his initial reaction to what he saw was to go to Munich and start killing Germans. Instead, he was ordered to move on.

Initially, the effects of what he saw did not stay with him. But when he arrived home and heard more about the Holocaust he joined B'nai B'rith and told people about it. Fromes also related that his experience made him determined to work with young people, even teaching a group who were planning to go fight in Israel how to use guns. He wanted to go to Israel himself, but his wife vetoed the idea. He has also told his children about the Holocaust and what he witnessed.