

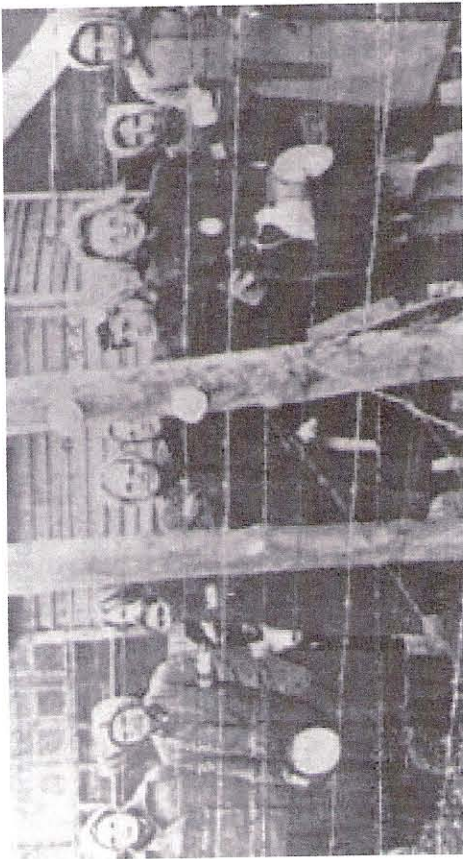
**Naval Oceanographic Office**  
**TWELFTH ANNUAL OBSERVANCE**  
**DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE**  
**VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST**



**Guest Speaker: Erika K. Eckstut**



**Thursday, 25 April 2002**  
**Maury Oceanographic Library**



Women survivors from Ravensbruck. -- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum publication:

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“The Holocaust shatters faith – faith in God, secular faith in human decency, and faith in meaningful progress. Although the Holocaust provides few answers and raises many questions, the questions invite moral struggle against that evil.

The call from the victims – from the world of the dead – was to remember. Today we hear from those who were there and those who were not the urgency of memory, its agony and anguish, the presence of meaning and meaning’s absence. To live in our age, one must face that absence as well as that presence.

Rabbi Nachman, a great Hasidic master of paradox, once said that nothing is as whole as a heart that has been broken and mended.

The Holocaust shatters. Our task is to mend”

--Michael Berenbaum, Ph. D. Project Director for the creation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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We encourage you to join with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in observing the Days of Remembrance. For further information, please contact: Days of Remembrance, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW, Washington, DC 20024. <http://www.ushmm.org>

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## THE HOLOCAUST AND THE NEW CENTURY: THE IMPERATIVE TO REMEMBER

**Holocaust Remembrance Day** has been set aside for remembering the victims of the Holocaust and for reminding Americans of what can happen to civilized people when bigotry, hatred and indifference reign. The United States Holocaust Memorial Council, created in 1980, was mandated to lead the nation in civic commemorations and to encourage appropriate Remembrance observances throughout the country.

“As we enter the new millennium, the Holocaust has taken its place as a defining moment of 20<sup>th</sup> century humanity, the moment we learned something about what we are as individuals, about human capacity for good and evil. But we have learned more about ourselves as individuals. We have learned about the power of states and institutions to shape the world and to accomplish so much, even the annihilation of a people. As we make the transition into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, one has an uneasy feeling that there is a struggle between tribalism and globalism.

There is a paradox in the study of the Holocaust: The more distant we are from the Event, the more interest seems to grow. Why study the Holocaust? The answers are complex, but the underlying reason is simple. Because it happened....

Because it happened, we must understand the evil – systematic, state – sponsored evil, industrialized killing, mass murders – that was the essence of the Holocaust. We must understand its emblematic invention, the death camp, as well as the people who staffed such camps. Their assignment: mass murder. Some were sadists and criminals –people unlike us – but many were ordinary men and women trying to do their best, to fulfill their obligations. Some were enthusiastic, others more reluctant, all became party to mass murder.

We must understand the circumstances of the victims, who had to make choiceless choices between the impossible and the horrific, and who faced conditions of such utter powerlessness that they could do so little to determine their fate. And we must understand the indifference of neutrality. In the struggle between powerless victims and an overwhelmingly powerful killing machine, neutrality is anything but neutral. Indifference is a death sentence.

We can learn so much about evil while studying the Holocaust that it leaves us numb, that despair overtakes us, that we can sense our own helplessness. Indeed, the Holocaust was an atrocity, senseless and anguishing. But there were a few – a precious few men, women and even children – who opened their homes and their hearts and provided a haven for the victims, a place to sleep, a crust of bread, a kind word, a hiding place. What makes such goodness possible? Why were some people immune to the infection of evil? These are the people whose deeds we may wish to emulate, who can serve as models for how we want to behave and what we want to become.”

--Michael Berenbaum, Ph. D. Project Director for the creation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

## NAVOCEANO 2002 Days of Remembrance Ceremony

### I. Opening Remarks

**Richard Balser**  
Program Staff

### II. DEEOO Remarks

**Ms. Claudette Flynn**  
Deputy EEO Officer

### III. Invocation

**Rabbi Yossie Nemes**  
New Orleans *Chabad* Center

### IV. Captain's Address

**CAPT Philip G. Renaud**  
Commanding Officer,  
Naval Oceanographic Office

### V. Guest Speaker

**Erika K. Eckstut**

### VI. Awards and Closing Remarks

**Erika Eckstut** was born in Znojmo, Czechoslovakia in 1928. In 1931 she moved to Bucovina (at that time part of Romania) with her family. Her father was an attorney and her mother a homemaker. She has an older sister named Beatrice. Erika went to public school and Hebrew school. Her grandparents were very religious, but it was her father who taught her about Judaism. Her parents instilled in her a strong sense of confidence. Erika was happy as a little girl, and had hopes and dreams for the future. For Erika, the Second World War began in June 1941.

She and her family were sent to the ghetto in Czernowitz. Her father was able to obtain false papers for Erika and Beatrice. She was separated from her parents in 1943 and kept on the move, hiding the fact she was Jewish. She traveled through Russia and Poland. In January 1945, she returned to Czechoslovakia and in September she and Beatrice were reunited with their family.

In 1948, Czechoslovakia was taken over by the Communists. In 1960, after her husband's death, a result of his wartime service, Erika and her two young children joined her sister Beatrice in the United States.

Erika was a medical technician supervisor with the Gillette Medical Evaluation Laboratories Pathology Lab for 18 years until retirement. She speaks to groups of all ages in the Washington DC Metropolitan area and around the nation; sharing her memories and bringing a lesson of hope and love. She lives in Potomac, MD with her husband David. They both are active volunteers at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

2002 Days of Remembrance Staff:

Richard Balser, Lawanna Ducre, Steve Faber, Wendy Walker-Wilz