

GEORGE KAISER - 2/25/88

(WITNESS TO DACHAU)

- 0 min. Born 1922 - Roxbury
Age 16 - Story of how to help family people from Europe. We wanted to help.
1940 - Age 17 - Forged birth certificate and enlisted in Army. Got Mother's signature. Non combatent awhile in U.S.
Not why he enlist - 20th army division (training unit).
- 5 min. Le Hauve, France - Combat began on German/Belgian border.
Dec. 1944 → thru Germany heading south to Bavaria. Staff Sargeant - armed infantry.
Antisemitism in service - mostly Southerners. Yankee & Jew - regular beatings. "Whole German army never inflicted as much pain on him as U.S. army."
- 8 min. "Marriage team" - weapons carried.
- 10 min. How Jews handled?
Brought to large building by German who showed room where Jews had been tortured - local SS used for interrogation.
Very medievel.
No conversation ensued - only his feeling of outrage.
Preparing for assault on Munich.
- 15 min. Put together convoy supplies - escort. Maps not good. Old German road maps. Road under fire - went to area near town of Dachau. Very tranquil scene → saw barbed wire - thought nothing of it → Gun fire. Saw bodies in striped clothes on roadside.
- 19 min. Open area - large compound on left. First troops had fought with guards. Still didn't know what was. Thought was prisoner of war camp - Gates opened. People rushed out - some killed German soldiers with shovels - another stoned.
Like watching a movie - then dawned on him it was a concentration camp. Had no feeling for people being chased.
- 23 min. Fired guns in air to keep people from town. Walked into camp - Prisoners surrounded then, patted on backs.
40-50 German soldiers held at gunpoint. No common law with prisoners - some spoke English.
Escorted into one of barracks - stench so bad couldn't breathe. I wanted to say I'm Jewish and American soldier but couldn't find the words. Agony, terror, frustration.
Had candy bars, fig bars - passed out whatever we had that was edible.

29 min. Guilt - why didn't they tell us. Prisoners gorged themselves on food supplies. Too rich for them - ate themselves to death. Saw no woman or children. Inmates showed them camp. Only there a few hours. Left supplies there.

33 min. Crematorium
Shooting mound - 3-4 ft high earth for prisoners since couldn't kill fast enough in gas chambers.
Stacks of bodies like cord wood, other helter skelter.
Ovens hot - picked up piece of black, was bone later found under three.
Return to batallian - never said word to other soldiers about what I saw.

1981 - First time ever told anyone about the experience.
Responded to notice about search for Jewish veterans who had liberated camps - went to conference.

Why was information about camps kept from them? "Shredding did not originate with Ollie North."