

I am here today to give you an eyewitness report on the liberation of Dachau, the most famous of all German horror prisons.

Before I begin I will give you a brief history of myself and the Army Unit I served with during World War Two. I was a Medical Technician attached to the 232<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment, which was part of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Rainbow Division, a 15,000 man fighting team who came from every state of the United States.

The Rainbow Division was activated during World War One and its most famous member was General Douglas McArthur who at that time was a one star general. Another famous member was Colonel Donovan who commanded the famous fighting 69<sup>th</sup> Infantry regiment in France and won great honors fighting the Germans. The Donovan Building in downtown Buffalo was named after him.

The Rainbow Division of World War Two was activated in Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, in 1943 under the command of General Harry Collins. The camp was located 4 miles from the town of Muskogee.

After we completed a year of training we boarded a ship at New York City and headed for France. On Dec. 9, 1944 we landed in Marseille, France and three weeks later we were fighting the Germans around Strasburg, the southern part of the Battle of the Bulge.

Within one week we lost 50% of our men, they were lying frozen in the ground. It was the coldest winter Europe experienced.

In March 1945, during our great offensive we were the first troops to march into Germany, first to hit the Siegfried Line and first to cross the Danube River.

We then fought and captured Wurtzburg, a city the size of Buffalo which was completely demolished.

We also captured Furth Schwanfurt, Nurnberg. On the way to Munich, our next objective was to liberate Dachau. The oldest and most notorious Concentration Camp operated by the Germans. Our men who had seen friends die and witnessed all the horrors of war were to turn pale and sick at what they saw at Dachau.

The trial of death that reached out to claim 6 million lives between 1933 to 1945 started at Dachau, the first of the Nazis prison camps. Adolph Eichman who went on to head the Nazi Campaign for the extermination of Jews got his start at Dachau in 1934. It was a training camp for the torturers and the executioners of the Nazi Regime. Among the graduates were men who became Camp Commanders of Concentration Camps, such as Auschwitz, Belsen, Buchenwald, and Nauthausen. On April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1945 we entered Dachau. A German Lieutenant surrendered the prison camp to General Linden, commander of our Unit. However German S.S. troops, "elite troops", had refused to surrender the camp. They were slaughtered when they resisted. They fought to the last man.

When the first Americans entered the camp, 33,000 inmates went wild with joy and at the same time joined in the battle against the Germans, some of who had changed into prisoner's striped clothing in an attempt to escape.

The first hysterical group of prisoners to see the Americans rushed and was pushed into an electrical fence, which surrounded the camp, and several of them were killed.

When the American soldiers entered the Camp, the prisoners rushed and tried to hug them and get autographs. ~~Others rushed out and with clubs and stones set out to hunt~~

down the Nazi guards who had starved and tortured them for years. Some Nazis were beaten to death; some were thrown in the Moat and some shot with their own weapons.

Everywhere we saw sights that filled us with horror. There were 50 boxcars perched along the railroad sidings outside the camp containing approximately 1500 bodies, most of them <sup>NAKED</sup> marked and piled on top of each other. These prisoners were shipped without food from other Concentration Camps such as Buckenwald. There was no room for them in the prison camps so they were forced to remain in the boxcars where they all died except for one.

Inside the Camp I saw many dead S.S. troops lying all over the ground. They had made a futile attempt to defend the Camp.

Just prior to the liberation approximately 200 prisoners were killed by the S.S. with machine guns and their bodies were stashed like cordwood by the inmates. I saw bodies of women and children also.

I saw the gas Chambers where thousands of prisoners were led to believe to be showers, but were gassed to death. We also saw the ovens where the bodies were cremated. The adjourning rooms still contained stashes of the bodies ready to be cremated, however they had run out of coal to fuel the furnaces so they lay there.

Some days as many as 200 prisoners were cremated in a single day. Toward the end of the war bodies of prisoners were dumped into open graves or thrown in the Moat, which surrounded the camp.

The stench in the Camp was horrible. The prisoners had become like animals and even as we moved through the camp, many were dying.

It was so sad after finally being liberated. We were all given special immunization shots after being in contact with the prisoners.

Dachau was a nightmare to all the men of the Division. Man after man was saying now I know why we are fighting. These Nazis are mad men and the people who operated the Camps were insane, they are beasts and must be destroyed.

In the nearby town of Dachau, I asked the residents if they knew what was going on in the Camp. They claimed they never knew these horrors existed. They heard the trains going in and out that was it. It seemed unbelievable that they didn't know.

We spent two days there and when the rear troops caught up to us we headed for Munich and captured it on April 30, 1943 along with the Path house and the Koenig Plate where Hitler's huge rallies were held.

In Munich ¼ of a million slave laborites were liberated they went wild with joy and had a great time looting the city.

On May 4<sup>th</sup> we entered Austria, and settled around Salzburg where we awaited orders to go back home.

A few years ago I was thrilled to see our Division in combat on the T.V. program "Real People". At the end of the program after showing the liberation of Dachau, 6 men stood up, former Rainbow Division soldiers. They received a tremendous applause. As I gazed on these old men it was hard to believe that they were once a part of a great combat team. I then realized I was in the same boat.

In conclusion may I say I hope that this eye witness report of the horror and the atrocities at those death camps will remain alive in generations to come and will be to act as a determined to future horrors such as this.

It is interesting to note that Holocaust Day is being observed on April 29<sup>th</sup> by the Jewish Center, the same day we Liberated Dachau.

In January of 1946 I was stationed in the City of Heidelberg when I heard the news that General George Patton was killed in an auto accident. It's ironic as Commander of Armored Tank Division, a most famous General to die that way.

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H2B - 232 Inf

Nov. 25 New York Pier 27 Ober Plecking  
Dec. 8 Marseille 28 Ober Saar  
20 St. Etienne 29 Ober Brath  
21 Dijon 30 Albach  
22 Korhange May 1 Munich  
23 Schlitzheim 2 Moschenfeld  
24 Burdt 3 Henzing  
28 Staddourg 4 Pittmoning  
30 Burdt 15 Kireberg(Austria)  
Jan. 5 Feyersheim-Gambshelm 20 Kirchseeon  
25 Nagueneau 21 Baldam by Munich  
26 Bossendorf 27 Zell an Illier(Austria)  
29 Seuleghausen  
31 Moncel-sur-Seille  
Feb. 17 Timmenau-Champagne  
Mar. 16 Althorn  
17 Mutterhouse  
18 Barenthal-Phillipsburg  
19 Sturselbaun(Germany)  
22 Dahn-Ober Stettenbach  
15 Schortenburg(crossed Rhine at Worms)  
Apr. 1 Unter Altenbach  
2 Schollbrunn  
3 Unterlinnach  
4 Hackberg-Wurzburg  
7 Rimbach-Halsheim  
8 Huegtnbach  
9 Schonferried  
10 Sommersdorf-Zell  
11 Unter Etkhausen  
13 Schweinfurt  
14 Sommersdorf  
16 Beerback  
17 Deberndoff  
18 Steinbach  
19 Lebersdorf-Regeladorf  
20 Gross Nurnberg  
21 Kapindorf  
22 Thieienhafer  
23 Monheim  
24 Itzing  
25 Altenheim(crossed Danube)  
26 Gendenkingen(crossed Seck)

Lyons  
Dachau  
Zurth

# DACHAU

By Tec 3 James W Greasman

DACHAU is no longer a name of terror for hunted men. 32,000 of them have been freed by the 42d Rainbow Division. The crimes done behind the walls of this worst of Nazi concentration camps now live only to haunt the memories of the Rainbowmen who tore open its gates and first saw its misery, and to accuse its SS keepers of one of the worst crimes in all history.

When Infantrymen of the 42d Division fought their way into Dachau against fanatical SS troops who met deserved violent deaths along the moats, behind the high fences and in the railyards littered with the bodies of fifty carloads of their starved victims, these hardened soldiers expected to see horrible sights.

But no human imagination fed with the most fantastic of the tales that have leaked out from the earliest and most notorious of all Nazi concentration camps, could have been prepared for what they did see there.

The keen descriptive powers of a score of ace correspondents who entered the camp while the battle of liberation was still in progress, and through whose eyes the whole world looked upon that scene, could not do justice to this story. Seasoned as they were by long acquaintanceship with stark reality, these trained observers gazed at freightcars full of piled cadavers no more than bones covered with skin and they could not believe what they saw with their own eyes.

Rifleman accustomed to witnessing death had no stomach for rooms stacked almost ceiling-high with tangled human bodies adjoining the cremation furnaces, looking like some maniac's woodpile.

And when an officer pressed through mobs of the forgotten men of all nations inside the electric barbed wire enclosure and entered a room where lay the dying survivors of the horror train, he wept unashamedly as limp ghosts under filthy blankets lying in human excreta, tried to salute him with broom-stick arms, falling back in deathly stupor from which most would never rouse.

Ten days before the arrival of the Rainbow Division fifty carloads of prisoners arrived at Dachau from the Buchenwald concentration camp in a starving condition after 27 days without food. When Buchenwald was threatened by advancing American troops the Nazis hurriedly crowded about 4,000 of their prisoners into open flatcars unfit even for cattle. 27 days later -- days of exposure to freezing weather without anything to eat, a trainload of human suffering arrived at Dachau only to be left to die in the railyard leading into this extermination camp.

In these stinking cars I saw the bodies of these prisoners too weak even to get out. A few tried, and they made a bloody heap in the door of one of the cars. They had been machine-gunned by the SS. A little girl was in that car.

In another car, sitting on the bodies of his comrades, his face contorted with pain frozen by death, was the body of one who completed the amputation of his gangrenous leg with his own hands and covered the stump with paper. Underneath was one with a crushed skull. "He's better off now" was the comment of one newsman. Close by was one who had been beaten until his entrails protruded from his back.

But most of them had simply died in the attitudes of absolute exhaustion that only starving

men can assume. Curled up with their faces resting in fingers tipped with blue nails. With naked buttocks angling up to pivot on a skeletal pelvis. Or twisted over to show an abdomen stretched drum-tight against the spine with ribs making an overhanging bulge.

Some of the cars had been emptied and the bodies carted to the crematory. In one room adjoining the furnace-room on the left they were neatly stacked. The stripped corpses were very straight. But in the room on the right they were piled in complete disorder, still clothed.

With the help of a husky Yugoslav inmate who worked at the furnaces and who told that all four of them had been going "tag und nacht"... "day and night" with a capacity of 7 bodies each, the explanation was partially unfolded. The straight neat ones had probably been brought in alive, showered in the "Brausebad" or shower-room, then gassed or hanged from hooks on the rafters in front of the furnaces. Those on the right were just as they were dumped out of the freight cars where they had died of starvation.

It was incredible that such things could happen today, but there was the visible proof. It was unbelievable that human beings were capable of perpetrating such unspeakable atrocities, but there

were the men who did it. The SS.

At least 25 and perhaps 50 were beaten to death by inmates who struck with all the fury of men who suddenly release years of pent-up hate.

One was lying beside his own bloody artificial limb with which his brains had been exposed.

Someone said there were 14 in the canal.

One in a railroad car had no face left.

These once swaggering Hitler-worshippers would pocket no more of the profits from the hair-oil, shoe-polish, thermos bottles, notebooks, stationery, brushes, porcelain works of art, and cigarette paper manufactured there by men and women from all of Europe who slaved until starvation and disease made them worthless and then they were burned.

Now the SS guards were dead. But their deaths could not avenge the thousands dead and dying there in Dachau.

These tortured dead can only be avenged when our world is aroused so much by what the 42d uncovered at Dachau and by what others have found at all the other Dachaus scattered throughout Germany, that never again will any party, any government, any people be allowed to mar the face of the earth with such inhumanity.