



THE TEXAS LIBERATOR

Witness to the Holocaust

Before the start of World War II, the Texas economy was still mainly rural and agrarian. Only about 40% of residents had completed high school, 10% had access to a telephone, and only 16% had access to a radio. The state was particularly hard hit by the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression. While it was sympathetic to events in Europe, an isolationist attitude predominated.



TEXAS BEFORE AND INTO THE WAR



Basic flight training aircraft over the Randolph Field administration building, by U.S. Army Air Forces, 1942[?]. Source: Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Photograph Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington D.C.

Yet, when war was declared Texans answered. Texas Senator Thomas T. Connally introduced both Congressional joint resolutions to declare war on Japan, Germany, and Italy. Texas men joined the military by the thousands, while those farm families and small-town residents on the home front moved to larger cities to work in war industry plants.

Several Texas military sites played roles in training soldiers and Army Air Forces pilots. During the war an estimated 1.5 million military personnel rotated through Texas as part of their training at 175 installations built or enlarged for the war.

As with the rest of the country, supporting the war was the responsibility of every Texan—whether working in a field, in a factory, or on the battlefield. The effort was particularly hard, especially for any family whose son or husband left the comforts of home for the unknowns they would find a world away.



Top: Farm land near Amarillo, Texas, March 1943, by Jack Delano. Bottom: Members of the Texas Defense Guard assembled in the San Augustine High School auditorium. Source: Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Photograph Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

Background: "Dust blowing on Main Street." Dumas, Texas, by John Vachon, November 1942. Source: Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Photograph Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

WATCHING A TROUBLED WORLD

As the nation tried to recover from the Great Depression, families with a radio might listen to President Franklin D.

Roosevelt. In his "fireside chats," Roosevelt sought to calm the nation and restore public confidence in the economy and the government.

While Americans were comforted to some degree by Roosevelt's words, the newspapers and radio reported on the increasingly unsettling news from Europe. Accounts of militant ultranationalism in Germany and Italy toward their neighbors raised some concerns, as did the expansionist activities of Japan in Asia.

But these developments were literally a world away—and with pressing economic and social concerns at home—most Americans were not prepared to risk their lives and livelihoods to support or enforce peace abroad. Even after the start of hostilities in 1939 and the signing of the Tripartite Pact by Germany, Italy, and Japan the following year, many Americans preferred isolationism and non-involvement, even as Roosevelt sought other ways to help U.S. allies at war. This attitude began to shift as warfare continued, but it did not fundamentally change until after Japan's surprise attack on the American naval base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7, 1941—the "day that will live in infamy."



Top: Members of the Texas Defense Guard assembled in the San Augustine High School auditorium.
Source: Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Photograph Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

Background: Amarillo, Texas, March 1943, by Jack Delano
Source: Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Photograph Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington D.C.

THE CALL TO ARMS

The nation expected that it might be forced to enter World War II even before the formal declarations of war in 1941. Congress passed the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 amidst widespread popular support. This law required all men between the ages of 21 and 45 to register for the draft. Men who were drafted were required to serve at least one year in the military. When the bill took effect in 1941 the size of U.S. military forces increased from under 350,000 to almost 2,000,000 servicemen, with the largest increase in members of the Army. The forces increased further with the influx of volunteers enlisting after the December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor.



Top: Roosevelt signing the Selective Training and Service Act, creating the first peacetime draft, September 16, 1940.
Source: http://www.s.s.s.gov/current_story-archive/Draft63rd_Anv/index.html

Background: Service photo courtesy of Texas Liberator families



Top: Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, began drawing draft numbers – blindfolded – out of a glass bowl. The numbers were handed to the president, who read them aloud for public announcement.
Source: Associated Press

Once the U.S. officially entered the war, the contracts of drafted soldiers were extended to last for the duration of the war. By the time fighting ended, 10 million American men had been drafted—approximately 60% of all armed forces members.

THE AMERICAN MAN BECOMES G.I. JOE



Service photos courtesy of Texas Liberator families

The United States was still recovering from the devastating effects of the Great Depression when it entered World War II. During the 1930s food was hard to come by, and many families were forced to seek help from various charitable organizations. Men took jobs in the Works Progress Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps, or other work projects to help support and feed their families.

With the institution of the draft, the term "G.I. Joe"—which had originated during World War I—became more common as the draftee went through training and became "Government Issued." G.I. Joes were mainly thought of as Army soldiers or Army Air Forces pilots, but was equally applied to all members of the military.

The World War II G.I. Joe was a much smaller man compared to today's standards. He averaged only 5' 7" in height and weighed only 155 pounds. Despite his compact size, he was expected to carry a basic uniform and equipment weighing over 50 pounds, plus his weapon and any tools related to his specialized training.

After the Great War (World War I, 1914–1918) Germany suffered periods of political turmoil and economic hardship, which many people blamed on the Treaty of Versailles that marked the end of the war. The largest blow was the treaty's "war guilt clause" that required Germany to make enormous reparation payments to the Allied countries. It accomplished this only by printing more money, which contributed to extreme hyperinflation of the German economy.

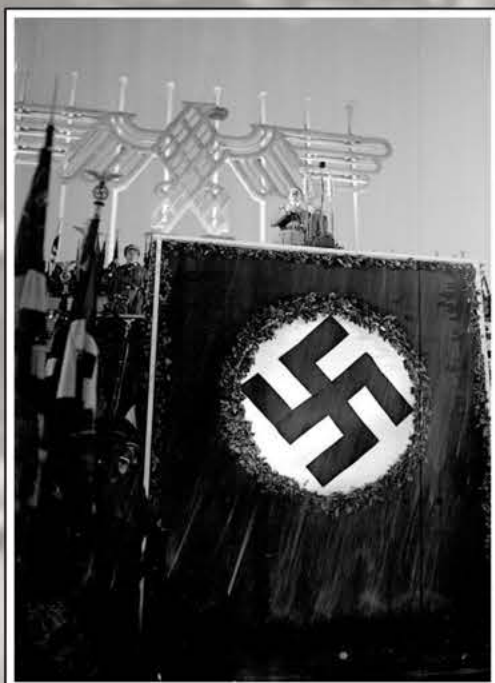
As early as 1923 Adolf Hitler took advantage of the frustration and unrest by attempting to overthrow the government. Even though it failed, the attempt left a lasting impact on his Nazi Party. The Nazis' popularity grew slowly until 1932, when the party gained control of the German *Reichstag* (parliament). German President Paul von Hindenburg, seeking to gain popular support for the government, named Hitler Chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933.

In the following months the German government suspended all rights of assembly, free speech, and freedom of the press while allowing unrestrained police powers. The constitution was modified to permit the Nazi Party to enact any law without the approval of the German *Reichstag* or the President.

THE RISE OF NAZISM

With those broad powers, Hitler enacted the racist and antisemitic policies that he first professed in his 1925 manifesto *Mein Kampf*. Jews, political opponents, and others were forced out of many professions, and members of some targeted groups were forcibly sterilized without their consent.

With the death of President von Hindenburg in 1934, Hitler was able not only to continue his role as chancellor (head of government) and Führer (head of the Nazi Party) but also take on the role of head of state, giving him complete control over all of Germany. Hitler now led a fascist state, and the Gestapo and SS terrorized those whom they suspected of opposing the regime.

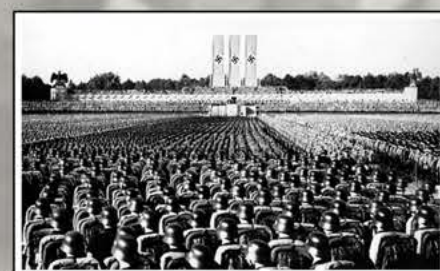


Top Right: Children playing with stacks of hyperinflated German currency, ca. 1922. In late 1923 one dollar was the equivalent of 4,200,000,000,000 German marks.
Source: unknown

Right: Annual rally of the Party in Nuremberg, 1934.
Source: Propaganda film *Triumph des Willens* (1935), by Leni Riefenstahl.
Source: unknown

Left: Adolf Hitler addressing a National Socialist German Workers Party rally during the Nuremberg Convention, September 1934.
Source: Bundesarchiv, Bild 102-04051A / CC-BY-SA 3.0

Background: Nazi army parade
Source: unknown



ANTI SEMITISM

By 1880 the European preoccupation with defining and studying groups deemed to be races brought to the forefront a call to exile Jews. This effort was apparent in many places, including Germany, where the term *antisemitism* emerged to name a new, organized political movement against Jews. The concept of the “survival of the fittest” likewise led to scientific ideas later perverted by the Nazis as a way to attack Jews and other groups through eugenics. Despite these threats, most German Jews were able to assimilate and took pride in contributing to the nation.



"Behind the Enemy Powers: the Jew." During World War II Nazi propagandists frequently depicted "the Jew" as a conspirator plotting world domination by acting behind the scenes in nations at war with Germany. This caricature represents the "Jewish financier" manipulating the Allies, Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union. By Hanisch, ca. 1942. Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, gift of Helmut Eschwege



Poster for the 1937 propaganda exhibition, "The Eternal Jew"
Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum collections

The Nuremberg Laws (1935) revoked the citizenship of every Jew and Roma (pejoratively referred to as "gypsy"), prohibited intermarriage, and crafted a definition of Jews as a blood group that included individuals who never practiced Judaism. Jewish-owned businesses were boycotted, seized, and taken over by non-Jews. Eventually thousands of laws singled out the Jews, whom the government actively helped portray as subhuman in popular culture and propaganda. Throughout most of the 1930s, the Reich encouraged Jews to leave the country, though they had to pay to do so.



1935 "Nuremberg Race Laws" chart showing legal classifications and authorizations of marriage for pure blood Germans (4 white circles), Jews (3-4 black circles), and those of mixed blood.
Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum collections

Background: Roll call for newly arrived prisoners, mostly Jews arrested during *Kristallnacht* (the "Night of Broken Glass"), at the Buchenwald concentration camp, Germany, 1938.
Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum collections

With the rise of Nazism and the wounds of World War I fresh on their minds—from hyperinflation to famine, with great social and cultural turmoil—world leaders in the mid- to late 1930s wanted to avoid another major conflict. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain quickly became the face of the policy of appeasement when dealing with Germany. He granted seemingly minor concessions to satisfy Hitler’s demands while denying Hitler opportunities to start a new war.

PATH TO WAR

Hitler took advantage of the appeasement policy to avenge Germany of what he saw as the humiliation of the Treaty of Versailles. In

defiance of the treaty Hitler introduced military conscription and quickly enlarged his army so that in 1936 it marched unopposed into the Rhineland. In March 1938 Germany annexed Austria. Following a series of threats and negotiations, Hitler secured the Munich Agreement, in which Britain, France, and Italy agreed to permit the division of Czechoslovakia between Germany and others.

Utilizing a military strategy called the *Blitzkrieg* ("lightning war"), Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. The attack was so swift that Poland was unable to mobilize any meaningful military response. Having guaranteed the sovereignty of Poland, Great Britain and France were finally forced to take action. On September 3, 1939, the two countries declared war on Germany—marking the beginning of World War II. Two weeks later, under the terms of the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact signed in August, the Soviet Union moved to occupy the eastern half of Poland.



Top: New York Times headline for September 1, 1939, reporting the German invasion of Poland.

Background: German troops marching victoriously through the streets of Warsaw after the invasion of Poland, September 1939
Source: National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Md.

At the same time as it built and expanded its military power, the Nazi regime designated or built a series of detention facilities to imprison “enemies of the state.” Most early prisoners were German communists, socialists, Social Democrats, Roma, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and homosexuals. These facilities were termed “concentration camps” because those imprisoned were centralized in one location.



Jewish forced laborers building the wall that will surround the Warsaw Ghetto.
Source: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej

EARLY CONCENTRATION CAMPS AND GHETTOS

The Nazis reintroduced an old European policy of requiring Jews to live as a separate population in ghettos, but now with the purpose of completely isolating, overcrowding, starving, and ultimately killing the residents. The invasion of Poland brought larger numbers of Jews under German control, so by late 1939 the Nazis were concentrating urban and some regional Jewish populations into designated ghettos, especially in large Polish cities. In Warsaw over 400,000 Jews were crowded into and walled behind an area of 1.3 square miles.

After Germany’s annexation of Austria in March 1938, a concerted effort to round up German and Austrian Jews began. The November 1938 *Kristallnacht Pogrom* against the Jews included government-sanctioned destruction of property, public

beatings, mass arrests, and murders. Many adult male Jews

were incarcerated in concentration camps. This marked a turning point in Nazi antisemitic practice, which rapidly increased and concentrated into the hands of the Nazi SS.



Jews who had been in hiding in Warsaw being forced out by German troops
Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Background: Entrance gate to the Warsaw Ghetto and part of its surrounding wall.
Source: Polizeiarchiv, Dortmund (via Yad Vashem Photo Archives)

With the opening of concentration camps, Germany saw many imprisoned people as an economic resource—one that could be leased to German companies or used by the government to fill needs caused by desperate labor shortages. Forced labor—often pointless, humiliating and imposed without suitable equipment, clothing, nourishment, rest, or safety standards—formed a core part of the concentration camp regimen. At its peak, forced labor made up approximately 20% of the total German workforce.

GERMAN LABOR CAMPS

Forced labor projects varied, but most involved hard

labor and construction. Much of the German *Autobahn* network was built using forced labor. After the German invasion of the western Soviet Union in mid-1941, more laborers—including captured Slavic peoples and captured Soviet prisoners of war—were sent to factories and forced to work towards the war effort. Many German corporations exploited these prisoners as a cheap source of labor. The Nazis often set up a makeshift camp adjacent to key factories or facilities.

According to Nazi philosophy, most prisoners came from inferior blood groups, and thus deserved to serve their Aryan masters. Although their work often held economic value, the vast majority of prisoners were likely to suffer beatings and other forms of torture, sometimes in the form of cruel, deadly games at the hands of the SS and their helpers. For Jews, the forced labor experience was a temporary stage in their planned murder known as the "Final Solution."



Top: Soviet prisoners at Mauthausen camp, January 1942.
Source: Dokumentationsarchiv des Österreichischen Widerstandes

Background: Soviet prisoners of war at Mauthausen concentration camp, October 1941.
Source: Bundesarchiv, Bild 192-096/CC-BY-SA 3.0



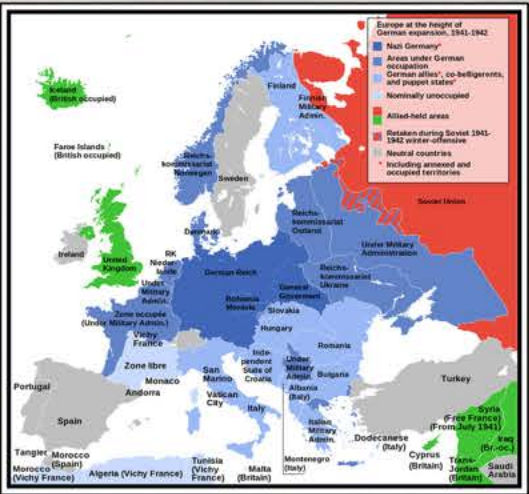
Germany planned for a short war. Following the invasion of Poland, Germany opened a western front in May 1940 by invading the Low Countries—the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxemburg—which had hoped to avoid conflict by declaring neutrality. Within six weeks, France had signed an armistice allowing the Nazis to occupy the northern half of that country. This was followed by the air war against England, the 16-week Battle of Britain, when the German *Luftwaffe* bombed London.

WAR IN EUROPE

By Fall 1940 Britain was effectively the only European nation still fighting against the Germans. Through its alliance with Italy and the Nonaggression Pact with the Soviet Union, Germany had effectively accomplished in a few short months what years of fighting during World War I failed to do.

The German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact had always been a tactical decision to avoid fighting a war on two fronts. *Lebensraum*, or “living space,” was a key component to the military and racial strategies of the Nazis. While the Nonaggression Pact delayed action to the east, the desire for autocratic self-sufficiency of both land and food resources remained at the forefront of Hitler’s plans. The dual missions of *Lebensraum* and “blood purity”—both of which were tied inextricably to the Jews—informed all the decisions of the Nazi regime.

With the western front largely secure, Germany decided in June 1941 it was time to invade the Soviet Union. The Nazis attempted to take control of key strategic points, but the German forces stalled during the battles of Moscow and Stalingrad and were subsequently pushed back by Soviet offensives. The fighting would drag on in many of these areas for three more years.



Top left: A German Heinkel He 111 bomber flying over the Isle of Dogs area of London on the first day of the Blitz (Battle of Britain), September 7, 1940.
Source: Imperial War Museums (C.5422)

Top: “Maximum Extent of Axis Advance in World War II, 1942.”
Modification of image by Goran tek-en, licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

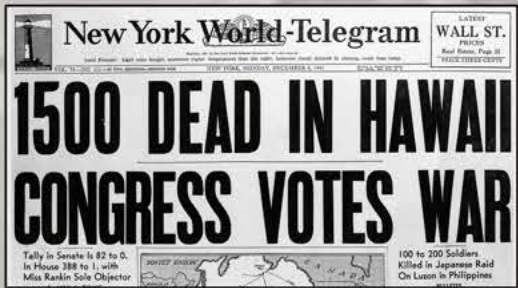
Background: London on fire during the Blitz, so many German bombs were dropped firemen had trouble keeping the fires under control. Smoke can be seen rising from London with the London Tower Bridge in the foreground as reference.
Source: Imperial War Museums



A factory that once turned out metal toys and motion picture projectors being converted to produce filter boxes used in jeeps and tanks. Keystone, Massachusetts, 1942, by Howard R. Hollem.
Source: Farm Security Administration/ Office of War Information Black-and-White Negatives

Unlike much of Europe, America enjoyed an economic boom, the "Roaring Twenties," after World War I. But by October 1929, the country succumbed to the economic crash that devastated Europe. Within three years about 25% of the U.S. population—up to 15 million people—became unemployed, and the country's industrial factories had to cut production in half.

U.S. ENTERS THE WAR



New York World-Telegram newspaper headline

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in December 1941 changed this. The United States immediately declared war on Japan, followed a few days later by a similar proclamation against Germany and Italy after those countries—declared allies of Japan—had declared war against the United States.

With the outbreak of hostilities, President Roosevelt chose to informally assist Britain and France by increasing defense manufacturing and building military infrastructure. This gave some relief to the unemployment crisis while sending material to the war effort. Yet most Americans felt safely isolated from World War II and did not wish to get involved.



Left: FDR delivering "A Day that will live in infamy" speech.
Source: National Archives.

Background: A 38 1/2 ton press at a Chevrolet Motor automobile factory being converted to make hood sides for 4x4 and 6x6 Army trucks.
Detroit, Michigan, 1942, by Alfred T. Palmer.
Source: Farm Security Administration/ Office of War Information Black-and-White Negatives

The Allied Powers decided they should first focus their energies on defeating Germany and Italy before turning their complete attention to Japan. Using a holding action in the Pacific, newly and hurriedly trained American soldiers joined the Allies engaging Axis forces in North Africa in 1942–43. In July the Allies landed troops in Sicily and began the liberation of Italy. These smaller successes were strategically important and gave troops valuable combat experience.

The outcome of the war, however, rested on the success of Operation Overlord—an ambitious landing on the beaches of Normandy that would start the liberation of France. D-Day took place on June 6, 1944. This successful invasion by six military divisions eventually led to the German withdrawal across the River Seine and into eastern France by the end of August.

In December 1944 the Germans launched the "Battle of the Bulge" counteroffensive—the largest battle ever fought in U.S. Army history. Although initially successful, the German military and infrastructure ultimately suffered extensive losses. This allowed the Allies to resume their planned

offensive, pushing the weakened Germans back into retreat. With the Soviets advancing on the eastern front, the Allies closed in towards the heart of Germany—and the startling discoveries that confirmed the rumors of Nazi concentration camps.

EUROPE FIRST STRATEGY



Men of the 16th Infantry Regiment, U.S. 1st Infantry Division wade ashore on Omaha Beach, June 6, 1944.
Source: National Archives and Records Administration



Camp prisoners at roll call, Buchenwald concentration camp, ca. 1938-1941.
Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

FINAL SOLUTION



A small minority of Jews was held back to become forced laborers at many of the camps, though the plan remained for them to be eventually murdered. Others, often Jewish or Romani children, suffered torture in the form of "medical" experimentation. Some inmates were forced by the SS to remove gold fillings and burn bodies; in turn, these same inmates would eventually meet the same fate. Cremated bodies filled the air with greasy ash and a foul stench.

Ghettos and concentration camps began after the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 as a short-term measure to control and segregate populations until the implementation of the "Final Solution"—a euphemism referring to the Nazi plan to annihilate all European Jews. Paramilitary *Einsatzgruppen* (mobile killing units) began slaughtering Jews, Roma, and political opponents in the Baltic States. This was initially accomplished by mass shooting, which was soon supplemented by vehicles in which victims were gassed.

The SS soon found a more efficient method for mass murder: Jews and other "undesirables" were packed into trains and deported to any of the six death camps (or killing centers) whose sole purpose was murder. Among Jewish arrivals to the camps, the elderly, the young, and the infirm were almost always the first to be sent to the gas chambers, but there were also instances of entire boxcars full of people, even the comparatively healthy, being immediately murdered. Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest death camp, was capable of gassing thousands per day. Not all death camps had gas chambers, but all shared a goal of killing as many victims as possible.

The Nazis and their accomplices were experts at mental, spiritual, and physical torture, and worked to quell victims' abilities to resist. Even so, several well-documented revolts occurred at some of the ghettos and camps.

However, most prisoners were in no physical condition to fight back, and any signs of resistance led to harsh punishments against other inmates.



Left: Jews from Carpathian Ruthenia arrive at Auschwitz-Birkenau, May 1944.
Source: The Auschwitz Album, collections of Yad Vashem Photo Archive

Top: Westerbork Jews (The Netherlands) boarding a deportation train to Auschwitz.
Source: Westerbork [Gemmeker] Album, collections of Yad Vashem Photo Archive

Background: Barracks in Sector BII of Auschwitz.
Source: Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum

As the Allies advanced towards and into Germany in late 1944, the Nazis desperately diverted resources away from their own defenses to accelerate the killing of Jews. During the retreat, SS members destroyed some of the evidence of their killing centers. They burned down crematories and other buildings and forced starving prisoners to trudge long distances in freezing weather. Those who lagged behind on these death marches were shot beside the roads, to be left with the thousands of bodies of those who had already collapsed and died.

By April 1945 Allied troops of the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union had nearly established control over Germany and German-occupied Poland. After personally witnessing the horrors discovered at the Ohrdruf concentration camp, General Dwight D. Eisenhower ordered every nearby unit not fighting on the front lines to also visit the camp. "We are told the American soldier does not know what he is fighting for," Eisenhower reportedly said. "Now, at least, he will know what he is fighting against."

As Allied troops encountered the former camps, they were horrified to discover the remaining evidence of the Holocaust—including mounds of corpses that had been left behind to rot. The liberating soldiers were shocked beyond imagination by what they now witnessed. Depending on the extent of malnutrition, many camp survivors would attempt to thank or embrace the soldiers. The memories of those moments would stay with the liberators forever.



General Dwight D. Eisenhower and other high-ranking U.S. Army officers view the bodies of prisoners killed during the evacuation of Ohrdruf, a satellite camp of the Buchenwald concentration camp, April 12, 1945.
Source: National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland

LIBERATION



Allach camp survivors waving a homemade American flag greeting 7th Army troops upon their arrival. Allach, Germany, April 30, 1945.
Source: National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland

Background: Mauthausen survivors cheer soldiers of the 11th Armored Division of the U.S. Third Army one day after their actual liberation, an event recreated at the request of General Eisenhower.
Source: National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland



Background: Mauthausen survivors cheer soldiers of the 11th Armored Division of the U.S. Third Army one day after their actual liberation, an event recreated at the request of General Eisenhower.
Source: National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland

THE TEXAS LIBERATORS



The following panels celebrate the narratives of 21 Texas Liberators, 19 of which were collected by the Institute for Oral History at Baylor University in a project funded by the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission and two of which were archived by the Holocaust Museum Houston. In their own words, these men tell us what they experienced as they entered the Nazi concentration camps, how they live with their memories as liberators, and what they feel are their responsibilities as witnesses to the Holocaust.

Modern day portraits by Mark Umstot

Service photos courtesy of Texas Liberator families

Excerpted and edited by Aliza Wong from original interviews
by the Institute for Oral History at Baylor University and the
Holocaust Museum Houston

SIGMUND LIBERMAN



What does being a Liberator mean to me? Well, I think that it meant that we did something well, and accomplished certain role. And not all of the Jews in Europe were cremated, there were some saved. There are Holocaust victims left here in the States, and also in the city here. [Being Jewish], I think it made a difference because I was part of them. And I think that the main thing is that we should not forget. And that's the one thing that I've been talking about at high schools and different schools. Most kids today don't even remember World War II. And here was the annihilation of a complete race of people.

And now the only good thing is I gave a speech one time, to a high school here in Dallas, about the

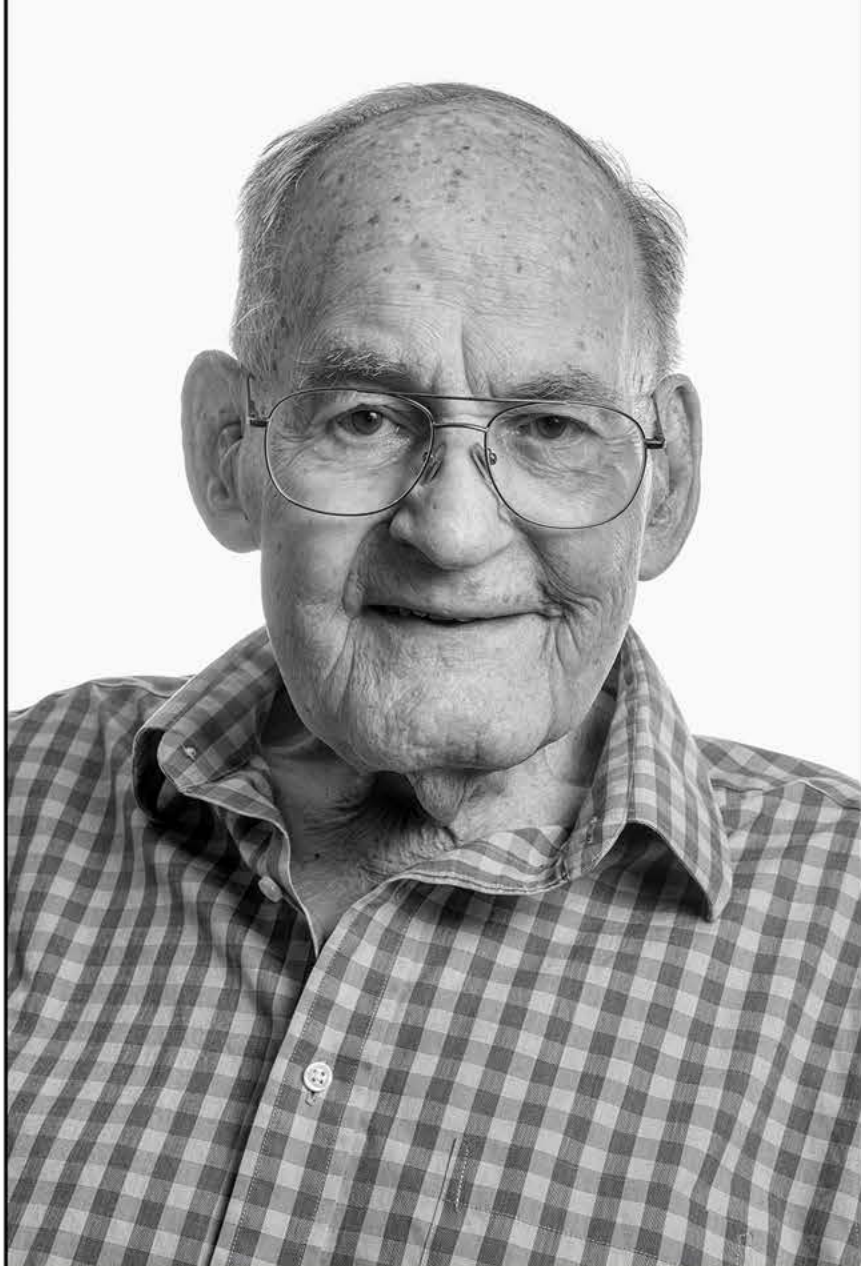
Holocaust and Nordhausen. And a girl came up to me after the speech and said, "Thank you, Mr. Liberman." I said, "Thank me for what?" "For you liberating the camp. You—" she said, "I wouldn't be here now, if you hadn't done that. My grandfather was there."

So here it brought back—again, one of the men that we freed went on to have grandchildren here in Dallas, Texas. So that—you know, it makes you real sad. And of course, it was sixty-five years ago, but still, the memory of it is—is rough.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
December 14, 2011*

*I think that the main thing is that
we should not forget.*

GEORGE H. WESSELS



We started out on the thirty-first of March. And we finally—the division finally got the clearance to, you know, start using the bridge. And then—but we—yeah, we started our first attack on the thirty-first of March, there across the river. And that was the same day when we ran into those slave labor camps.

And we were just moving on up, and then these buildings off to the side there, kind of like a stockade.

But evidently the Germans had taken off. And then the prisoners inside there had broken—I guess they broke down the gate or whatever. They were already coming out, and they were all over the place. And, oh, a couple of them grabbed my hand, kissed my hand. But they looked horrible. And they were emaciated,

skinny. I had never seen, you know, all the time—I came from Iowa. I had never seen anybody that thin.

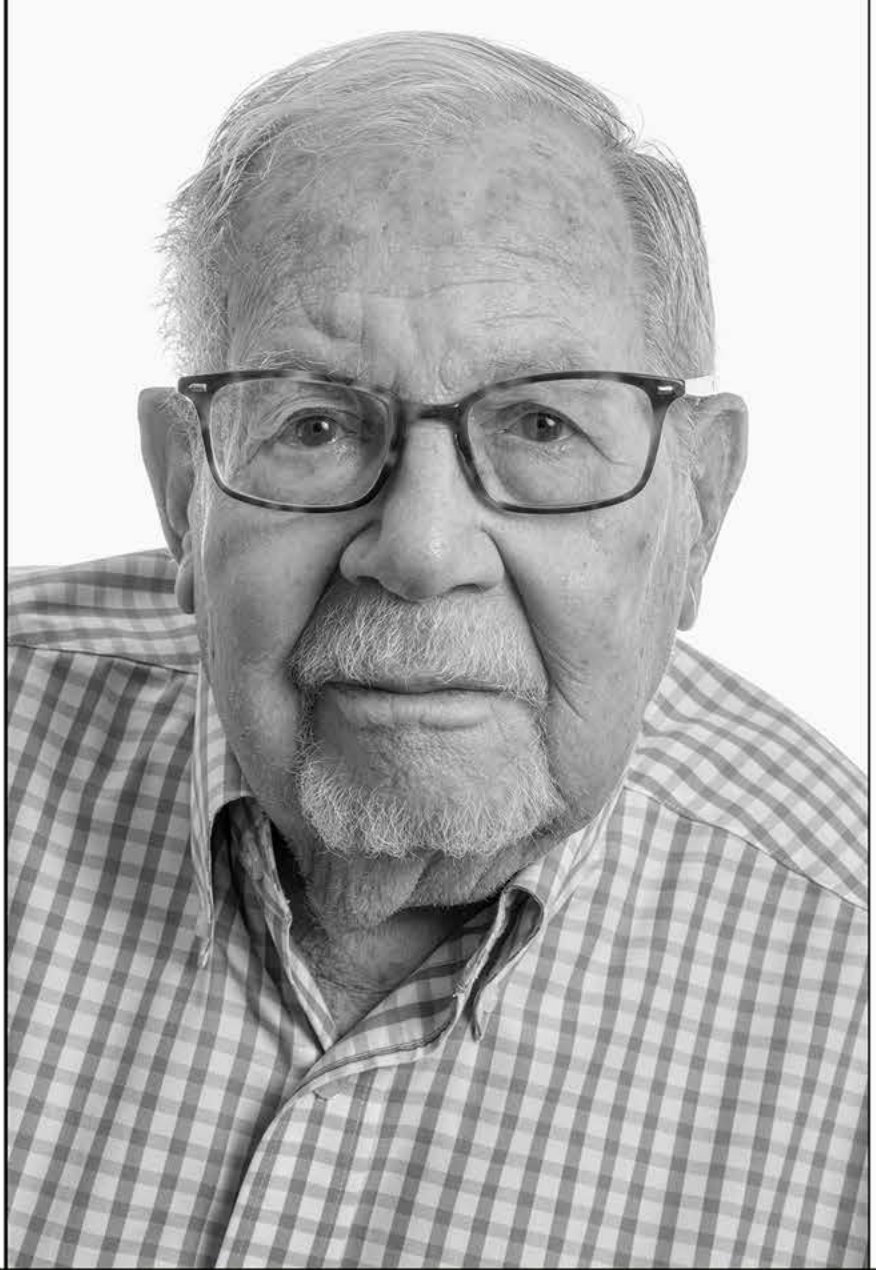
We hadn't heard of the camps. Not before then. We didn't even know it when we went along there and that—you know, it was a slave labor camp. We didn't know. They told us later on, about three to four days later. They said, "Oh, that was a slave labor camp that we went in."

The survivors were very happy to see us, yeah. There were big smiles on their faces.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
March 2, 2012*

*We hadn't heard of the camps.
Not before then.*

HERBERT U. STERN



I feel—it is so important since so many survivors, either Holocaust survivors or people like myself, feel that we're at the end of our lives and possibly, in another few years, there are no so-called eye witnesses that have been through all this. Since you're talking about the Holocaust itself—over six million people that died in one form or another plus the huge casualties during World War Two—that I think it's so important for younger generations to at least have some knowledge [of the] past.

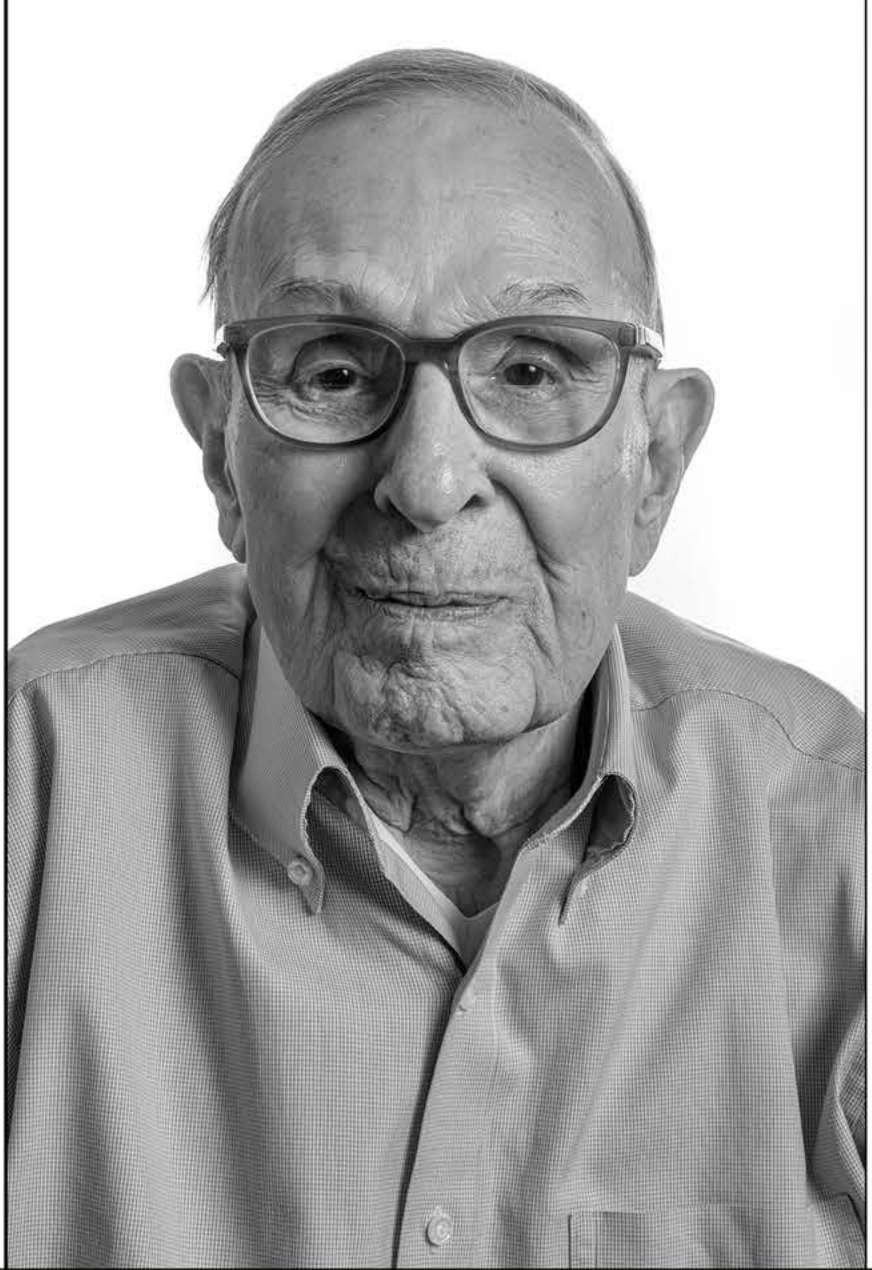
At the time I set foot in Nordhausen in March 1945, I had no specific knowledge of slave labor or extermination camps. Around 1940-41 some of us heard about what came to be known much later as concentration camps. My father had written from

England that he had received word that a number of cousins and my maternal grandmother had been sent to a detention camp in a town called Auschwitz. By 1942, it became known to the Allies that "The Final Solution" had been instituted by the Nazi High Command. This was the expanding roundup of thousands of Jews, political opponents, Gypsies, and homosexuals, and others, not only in Germany but also in the newly occupied countries. But not until the camps were liberated in 1945 did anyone become aware of the extent of the barbarities that were taking place.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
May 31, 2012*

*But not until the camps were liberated in 1945
did anyone become aware of the extent of the
barbarities that were taking place.*

J. TED HARTMAN



We were moving along, gaining more ground. All of a sudden, these people started showing up in strange-looking clothes, and we couldn't figure out what they were because we'd never seen anybody that had been in a concentration camp at that point.

They started showing up in these stripes, broad stripes. No one had ever told us—I'm not sure anybody knew to tell us—about the concentration camps. We started seeing these people coming out from the trees, from the woods, and then getting in the road and getting in the way. They just kept— more and more and more intensely coming. We'd find some of them lying in the ditches along the road. And then, over the radio they told us that they had just found out that these prisoners had been released from a concentration camp... It was Buchenwald. ...

...[T]hey had been released to get in our way and to slow our path, slow us down. They did slow us down, but they would stop us and kiss the front of a tank, or they'd salute us. It was—I couldn't help but cry myself. I had never seen anything like that. I couldn't understand. Some of them had their buddies with them. One of them was taking care of his buddy over on the side of the road. He wouldn't leave his buddy who, I gathered, was dying. It was just all sorts of little scenes, many scenes along the way.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
May 17, 2012*

*No one had ever told us—I'm not sure anybody
knew to tell us—about the concentration camps.
We started seeing these people ...*

BEN LOVE



The sight—as a I say, it’s a nightmare, and I’ll never forget the sight. We have learned that there were six million Jews who were killed. I can’t imagine anything in this country that could have happened without there being an uprising of the people in Beaumont, Texas, if there had been that kind of camp on the outskirts of Beaumont, and—or anyplace else here in this nation.

It has carried forward throughout that length of time.

I have great empathy for those who are in the minority segment. I don’t care whether it’s color, religion, whatever—great empathy. I am delighted, and I have never said this before and maybe I haven’t thought it out,... but I hope I practice what I preach...

I have told my children and grandchildren [about my experiences at Mauthausen]. They don’t understand it exactly. It’s impossible for them to conceive, impossible for my children to understand, too, but that’s the reason [this] work is important, I think. ...

We have a lot to pass on, but that’s one of the profound philosophical moral issues that we’ve got to pass along. We are passing on a lot of science, but that my being here today is I believe in what you believe in... that we mustn’t forget, we mustn’t forsake. We must graphically point out within the realm of our experience what a lack of tolerance can lead to.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Lidya Osadchey and
Ronnie Morgan
January 8, 1993*

*It’s a nightmare, and I’ll
never forget the sight.*



JOHN VALLS

We didn't know anything about the camps. I learned about Goering and Goebbels and all those after the war. I didn't know. I was just a kid from high school that really was very naïve. I didn't know anything. No. But when I saw that, I thought, "How can any people do that to other people? How—it's impossible. It's impossible!"

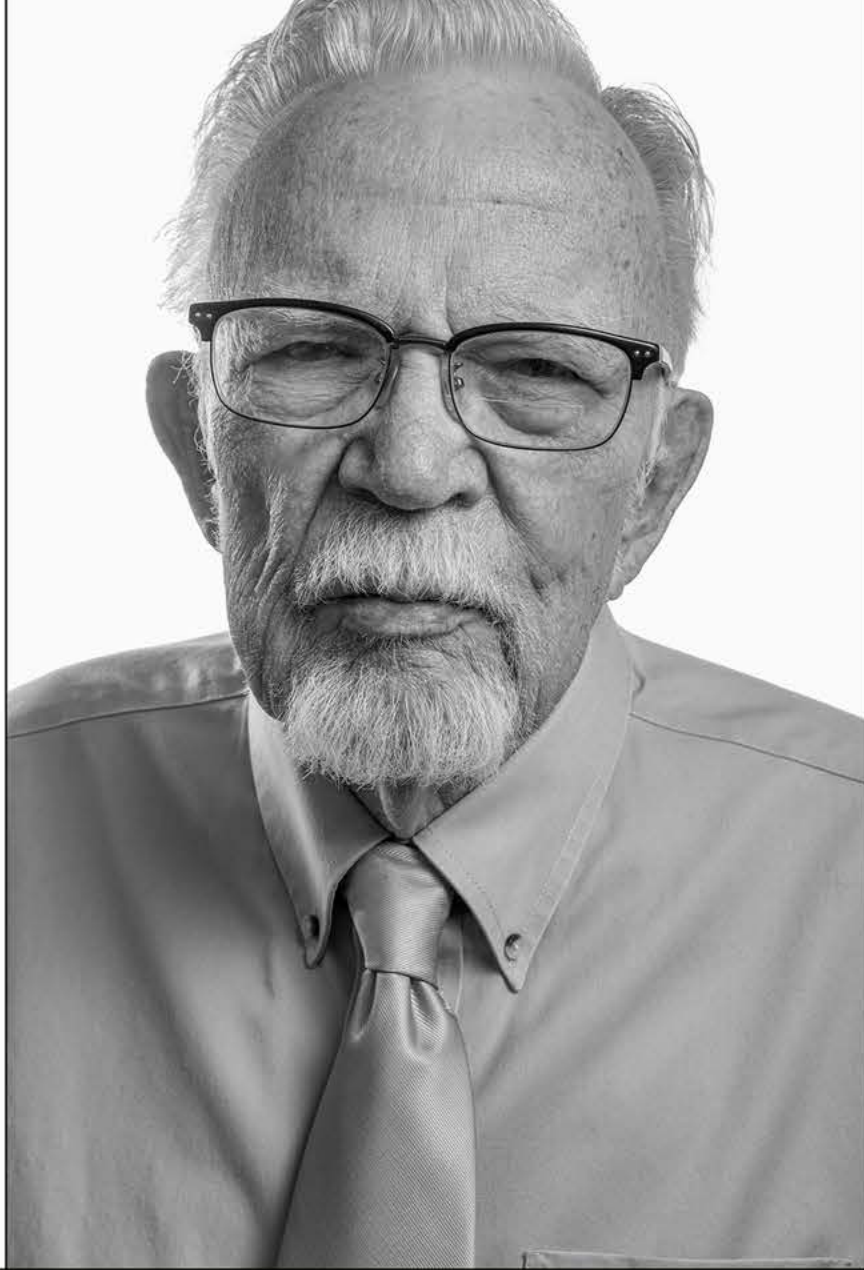
I don't even remember what the orders were for that day. My sergeant told me, "Hey, patrol this area and go into this area." And I was alone, and I walked and I saw a giant wall right by—right on the street. And I said, "This is strange." I didn't know it was a prison camp. I opened the gate. It wasn't even locked. I opened the gate, and ...I walked in and everybody was looking at me. Everybody was standing, and

there were some people in racks that I could see. They were laying down just—and all they did was got their heads up and looked and came right back down. They were dying.

And Eisenhower got the people in the town to come and parade down and see the atrocities. There was about five thousand bodies on the street, all just dead. I never saw anything like that. It was gruesome.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
March 2, 2012*

*Everybody was standing, and
there were some people in racks that
I could see.*



ROBERT P. ANDERSON

And I suppose another... a very lasting, uncomfortable memory, is that we didn't have a lot of heavy clothing.

We were getting it gradually, but we had—as a wire man you had to go out and you work with your hands, so you had gloves. And I lost a glove. And there was no other glove, so I was out a glove. So we were parked on a road in the convoy. And I looked over there, and there was a whole pile of soldiers, dead soldiers. They just lined them up on the road, you know, and then they were waiting for the mortuary trucks to come and pick them up. But they were mostly German soldiers. There was one American from our division, who had been killed the night before. So I went through those [bodies], looking for gloves.
I found a glove.

And—excuse me...

I took [the gloves] from a young German soldier, and on his belt, he had "God is with us." "*Gott mit uns.*" ...[And] my thought was, "Jesus, I've been praying to God all my life."

And he was my enemy, but the same thing.

It didn't make sense. It didn't make any sense at all.

*Excerpt from the interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
May 17, 2012*

*A young German soldier, and on his belt,
he had "God is with us." "Gott mit uns." ...
[And] my thought was, "Jesus, I've been
praying to God all my life."*

RAY BUCHANAN



We got word that there was a prison camp up there, up the road there. So we all went up there to see what was going on. The infantry had already taken over the camp just a few hours before we got there. But you know how GIs are. They want to help out. They want to get in on it. So we went up there to see. Now, I went up there, and I've never seen such a sight in my life. That was just—dead people in carloads, and all them walking around there with no flesh, just bones and—just hundreds and hundreds of them. Thousands of them. Just made me sick. The smell was awful, and to see all them people walking around there. I couldn't—I just couldn't stand it.

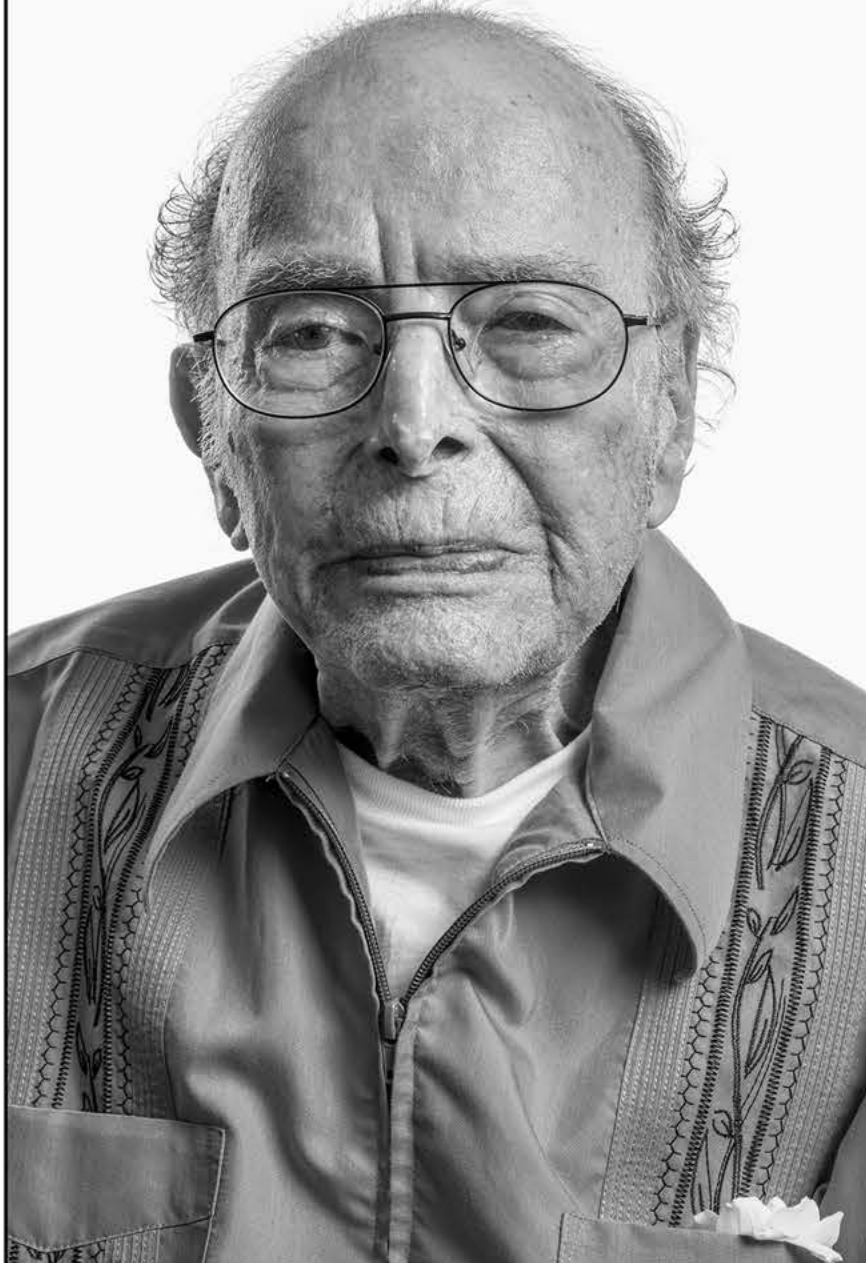
And the infantry we had had taken over Dachau. And it wasn't any—we didn't really have any business even

being up there, because I don't think the infantry needed our help. But, you know, nineteen-year-old boys and everything, they wanted in on everything. I seen all them people and everything. And the smell of it and all them people. They said there was fifty-two carloads of dead people that went out of there that day. And they dumped them. And so I didn't stay up there very long. I was just—I went up there to see what it was all about. And that's about all I remember of that.

*Excerpt from the interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
November 6, 2012*

*Now, I went up there, and I've never
seen such a sight in my life.*

HERMAN "HANK" JOSEPHS



The first thing we saw when we got to Dachau was a sign over the entrance which says "Work Will Make You Free—*Arbeit Macht Frei*." I looked at the prisoners in their striped garb, so filthy and decimated.

One of them moved, and I went over to him and he said, "*Bist a Yid?*" Are you Jewish? I said, "*Ich bin a Yid.*" I am Jewish. And then I told him, "*Alles geet.*"

Alles geet." I speak a little Yiddish, which is pig-German. And—" *Alles geet. Alles geet.*" All is good.

All is good. And I opened my C-rations and fed him a little soup—made a little soup for him. And I asked him

what his name was. He said, "*Meine namen ist Herman.*" "*Ich.*" My name is Herman, too. So I had tears in my eyes, and I cry every time I think about it.

This poor guy, he was about forty years old and

weighed about fifty pounds, maybe. And he died two hours later in my arms... .

I have a confession to make. The first forty years I was married, I didn't say a word about it. It was too horrible to dredge up my memory. But then in 2001, I wrote my autobiography so my kids would know what their father had gone through. And so I wanted them to know what I thought, where I was, where I've been, my situation, so that they would know.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
October 22, 2011*

*He said, "Meine namen ist Herman. Ich."
My name is Herman, too.*

JERRY B. MORGAN



Well, the next day [when we go to Dachau] I knew was going to be different. We had heard all kinds of rumors about concentration camps, about how they treated people and what they did to them. So we just kept inching our way into town—or into the camp, and where it took us was to the ovens that were a part of the camp. It was well-paved on both sides of the track, and the ovens were well-built. And there were three gondola cars there. Well, we couldn't see—from where we were, we couldn't see into them. So I had the driver drive up alongside one of them. We both got out and got up on the deck of the M-8 [armored car] and looked in. Believe me, the Holocaust existed.

They were loaded with bodies. The bodies still had their uniforms on, but they were purposely put there

for putting into the ovens. The whole truth became evident at that time. ...

I began to think about, well, why—how long had those people been in there? They couldn't have been in there over twenty-four hours. Otherwise, they would have begun to spoil. They were still in their clothing. So our timing there was such that, oh my God. Panic set in, and they took off. This was what they were doing at the time they took off.

But this was evidence that there was a Holocaust.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
May 18, 2012*

*The whole truth became evident
at that time.*

JOHN "JACK" FERGUSON REYNOLDS



We pulled into Nordhausen in the afternoon. There was this stink coming out of there, a big stench. And we went in there and our medics were in there. And they had all of these people that were nearly dead, and they were just feed-ing them a little teaspoon at a time of hot chocolate or something. And if they fed them very much, they'd get sick and die—get sicker and die. And they were just barely alive. And the smell was the smell of death.

And so they told us where it came from—and we all got in our truck and we went out there to the camp.

What I saw was all of these dead people laid outdoors, there on the ground, and it looked like acres of them. And there were others in there that they hadn't brought out. And just a terrible scene.

Nordhausen.

Well, it still bothers me. We went back to our apartment. And the guys in my squad were as fine a young man as they come. Nobody was saying a word. It was just almost like they'd forgotten how to talk or something, you know what I mean? It was just kind of beyond words. You know, we'd seen a lot of dead but nothing like that.

Nothing really prepared you for—...

Nothing.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
September 13, 2011*

*And if they fed them very much, they'd
get sick and die—get sicker and die.*



WILLIAM E. DANNER SR.

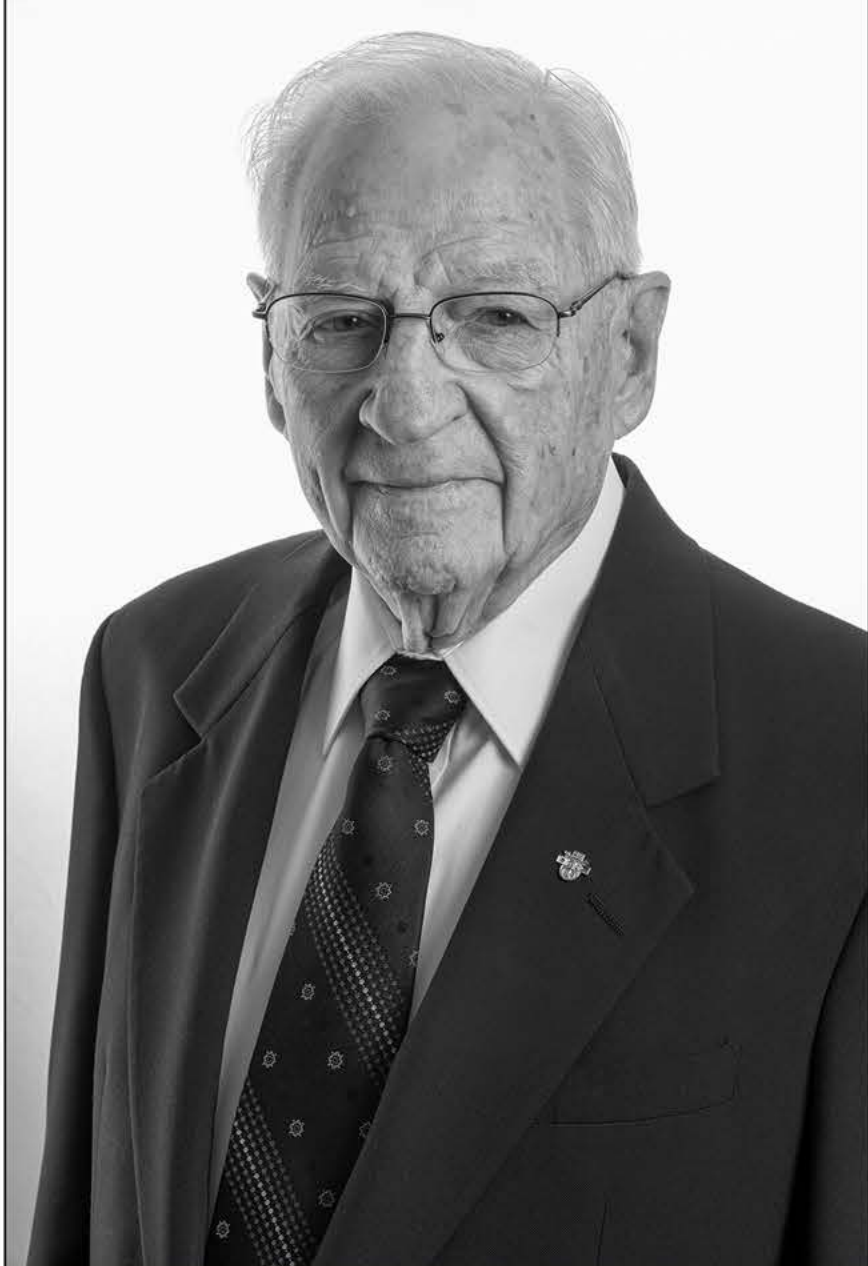
We approached the Nordhausen camp. I know somebody come back and said, "They've found a concentration camp. They've taken it." And we went up to see what was going on. And there was bodies. A building there that had stairwells, and there were bodies stacked under the stairwell like cordwood. They were laying out in the streets. And the medics come up. They brought up a medical battalion because some of them were still alive. Some of them were so weak that just a weak, warm broth did them in. They were that far gone to start with. And the people of Nordhausen, they denied knowing it was going on. But they found out in a hurry. They came out and had to clear up all the bodies. All the male residents of the city of Nordhausen, they had them

out picking up bodies. But we were there just a couple of days after that. Then we moved on, and that was—...

But I still cannot realize why people deny the fact that it took place. I know it did...I—I saw it. We had other places where we got into towns or places where they had this slave labor. They were—and the people we saw, some were Russian, Polish, all nationalities of people that were just slave laborers for the German forces. This was just a factory. And these people were just worked, worked to death.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
March 6, 2013*

*But I still cannot realize why people deny
the fact that it took place.*



WILLIAM A. WOMACK

When we got to Landsberg, all the prisoners were on the inside. The prisoners started drifting out. The poor inmates were just kind of—were in sort of a daze. They didn't act like they knew what they were doing. They [were] just milling around from one place to the other, in between the trucks. Some of them were just boys, you know, like teenagers. And some of them were old men. But they all walked with sort of a stiff-legged gait. They were nothing but bones. They just had a little skin. So they'd come up and they'd say, "Food. Food." When we first started we had rations in the truck and food scattered around the area, you know, like soldiers do. We'd get so much every day and we wouldn't eat it all, so we started giving them stuff. And the next day we found out we made a big

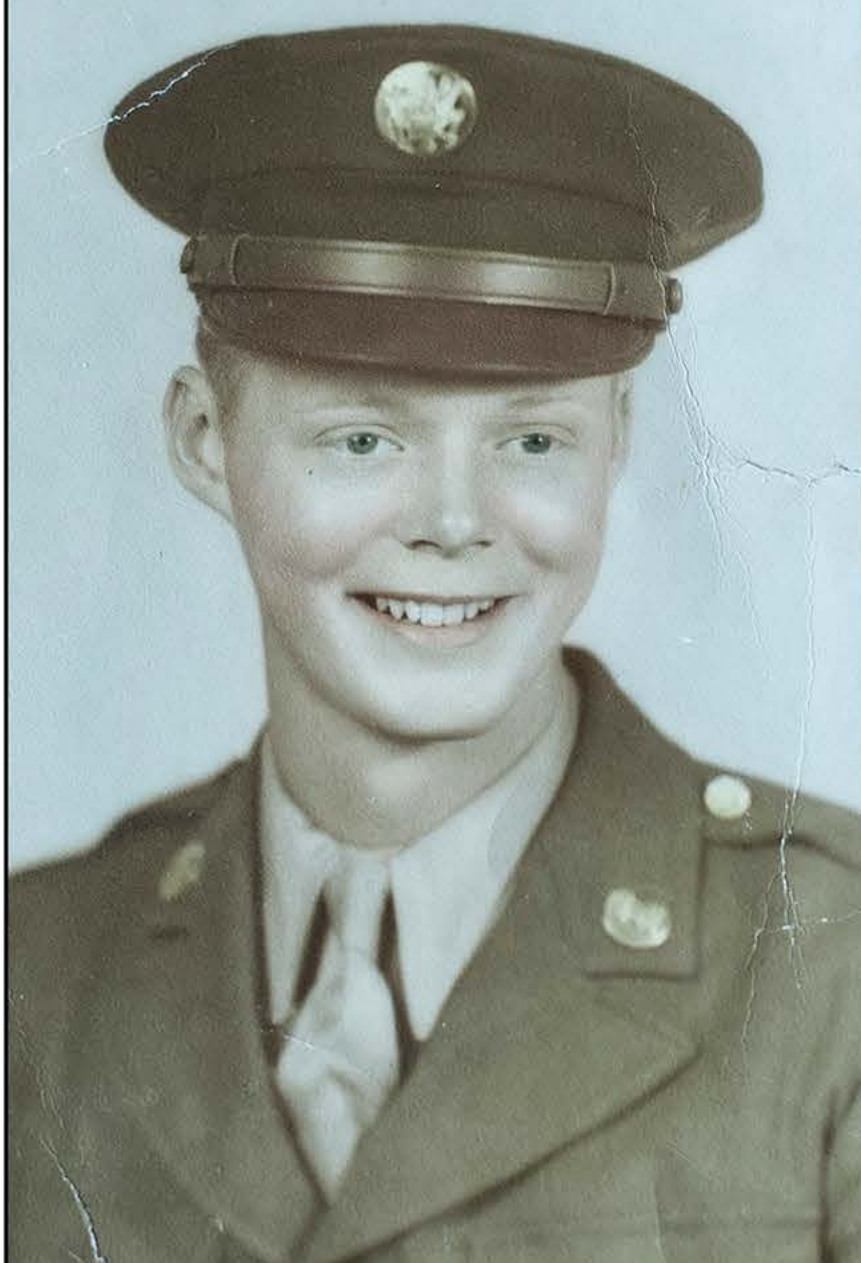
mistake in doing that, because our rations were so concentrated that it killed some of them. They had been on a diet of water and turnips for years, and they couldn't handle any high-protein food.

The Nazis wanted us to see the atrocities that were committed. And these—most of the bodies were just bones and skins. They were starved to death, I think. The cold will kill you. But that was just one of the things they wanted us to see about why we were there, why we were fighting. But it was something I haven't forgotten easily...

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
May 18, 2012*

*They were nothing but bones.
They just had a little skin.*

WILLIAM DIPPO



Seventh of May we arrived at Mauthausen. And what we beheld—and I'm sure I speak for my comrades—was worse, the condition of the people and what had transpired prior to our arrival was worse than the battlefield. They were terrible. They were covered with sores. They weighed seventy pounds. They were—if they were alive at all, they didn't go over seventy pounds. And they were all sick and had lice, and—and it was terrible. ...

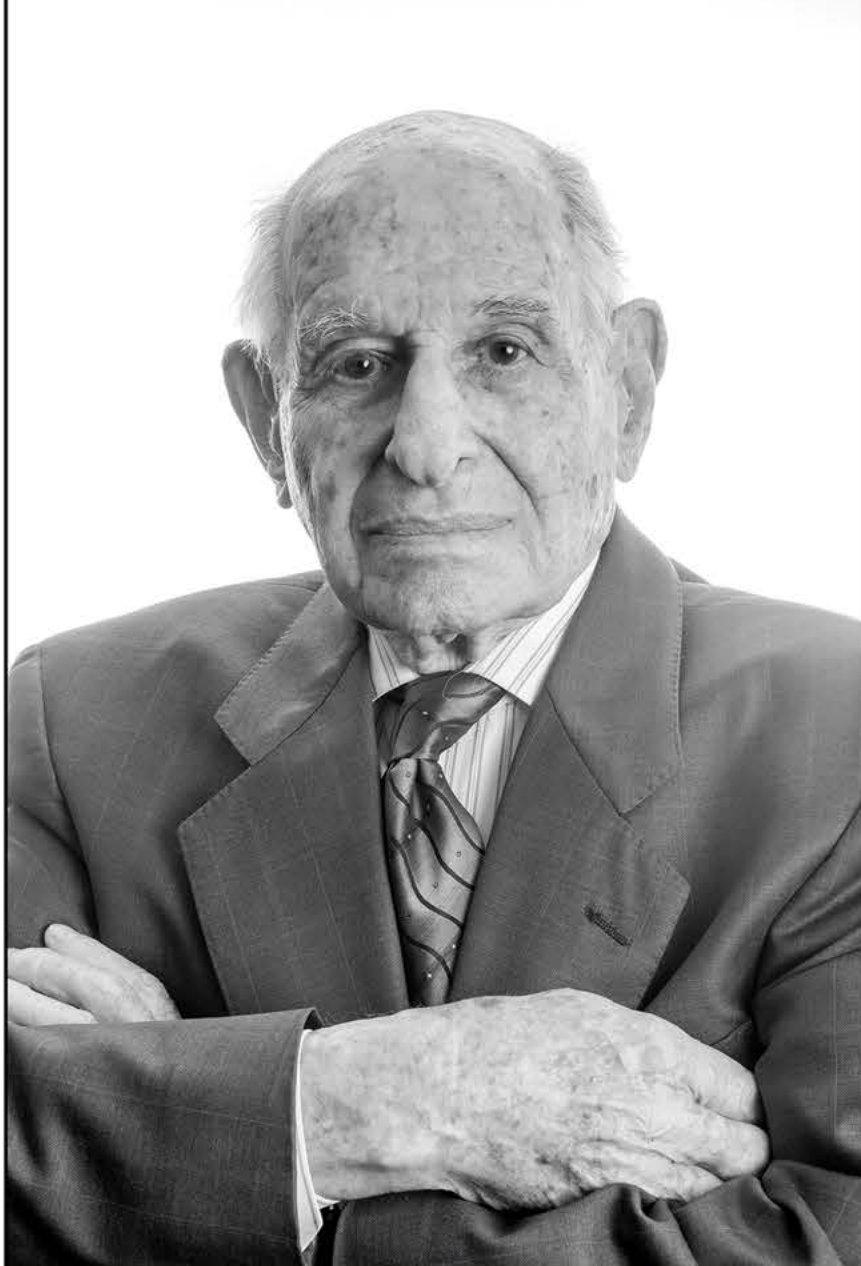
[T]he scene we beheld [at] Mauthausen was really the living dead. It doesn't get to you as badly as it does when you see a human walking like he's dead. ...[T]o see these human beings walking, shuffling, and mumbling, and they don't know what to do, and what's going on. It was terrible. It was pretty hard to take for most of us. ...

[I]f I mention it or even think about it, I get emotional. It's—I can't help it. Because it's there, it'll never go away. But—and then you see it in the museums, and you see it on television even. Well, you don't get a close look, but I have seen Mauthausen on television as well. But now it's all dolled up, and, of course, they can't go back and show those pictures on television, of course. But it is something that should never, never, never happen again. I don't care what we have to do to stop it. I'd be the first to go if they'd take me.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
October 21, 2011*

*It was pretty hard to take for
most of us.*

GERD MILLER



They said, "We need every German-speaking soldier to go to Dachau." And I knew right away what Dachau was because I knew it since I was a kid. But I never suspected to find what we did there. I mean it was—I can't begin to tell you. It was hell on earth.

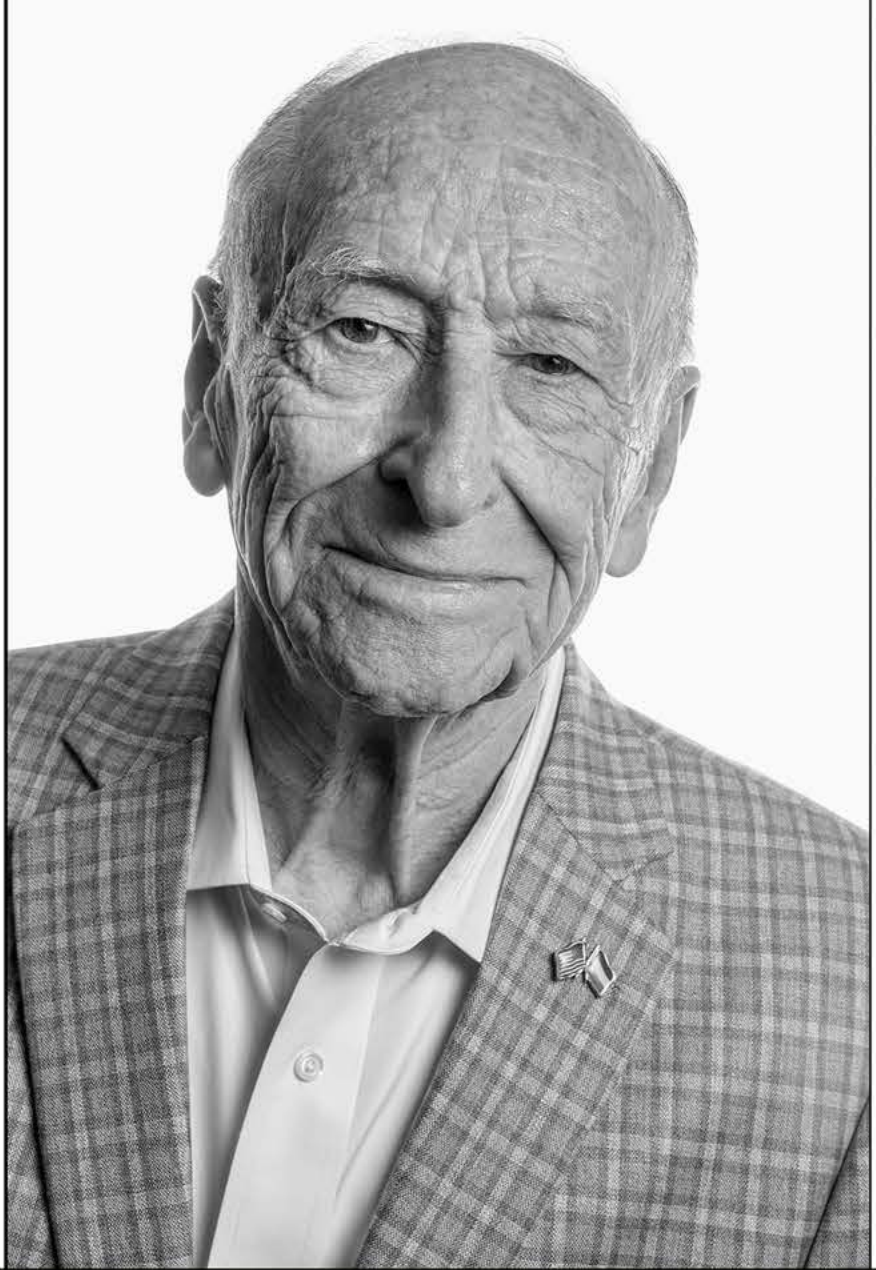
The people that were moving around, they were like skeletons. I mean, they were like zombies. A lot of them didn't have shoes, and they wore those blue and grey concentration camp outfits. Undernourished, covered with sores, teeth missing. I think they gave them eight hundred calories a day and worked them fourteen hours a day. These people were living skeletons and sick and weak. And their eyes were sunk. And they [were] covered with lice.

But we wanted to go through the camp first to see what we could do for those people. What could we do for them? I mean, the American GI, they see these poor starving people. They reach in and gave them their K-rations. They gave them food. An officer came and... said, "Do not give them food." He said, "They can't take that food. They haven't had a decent meal in months." All they got every day—they had these big kettles over a fire, and they got, like, a soup that was 90 percent water and cabbage, and some kind of crap in there. And then they got a piece of dry bread. That's all they got to eat.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
July 9, 2013*

*A lot of them didn't have shoes,
and they wore those blue and grey
concentration camp outfits.*

CHESTER "CHET" ROHN



We knew there were concentration camps. But it didn't really register till we started seeing the dead prisoners in the striped uniforms all along the road, coming from the north down to Mauthausen. And I don't know how to explain it, but you could smell it way before you got there. The corpses around there—they had what they called the hospital yard, where they put people that were dying. Nothing to keep the weather out, you know. You just stay behind this barbed wire till you die.

And I'd go—you'd look at somebody—the guy just be standing there, stark naked, on the other side of the barbed wire, and he'd just look at you with these vacant eyes. And you didn't know what to say to him or anything. I could have put my hand around a guy's

thigh with my fingers. And their hips were huge and and their rib cages stuck out all over. Their waists [were] about that big around. I couldn't believe some of them were alive. I thought, "How could anybody even be alive?" You know, maybe they weighed forty, fifty, sixty pounds. It was something so different than we had been used to seeing. We saw a lot of dead Germans and a lot of dead Americans, but nothing like this. It's almost impossible to describe. We couldn't believe it. We just couldn't believe it. But there it was.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
December 14, 2011*

*And I don't know how to explain it,
but you could smell it way before
you got there.*

WILSON CANAFAX



There was a young fellow, came up to me speaking perfect English. Looked like he was about fifteen or sixteen years old. And he said, "I see you have a cross on your lapel. Are you a chaplain?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Could you—do you think you could do us a favor?" I said, "Well, I can try." It turned out that this person that was talking to me was the young fellow, Eliezer Wiesel, who's known better today as Elie Wiesel.

And he says, "Could you do something for us?" And I said, "Well, I'll do my best if I can help you." I planned a worship service for them. A chaplain had many different ways to put things together, so I planned a Jewish worship service for those who wanted to come. We got our carry-alls, those big trucks, and put

the people who could be carried in those things to a place where we could have a worship service. They had to be lifted on. They had to be carried on, crying. They never thought they'd be alive.

We had some little prayer books that were distributed among those that wanted them. And on one side of it was Hebrew, Hebrew prayers. Other side was English. They cried. They shouted. When they got through, they were just raising their hands in joy and appreciation. They didn't think they'd ever see that again. They didn't think they'd be alive. ...

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
September 14, 2011*

*They didn't think they'd ever see that again.
They didn't think they'd be alive...*



MELVIN E. WATERS

And the afternoon that we arrived at Belsen. ...And we looked over to our left, and there was a camp over there. And the gates were open on the camp. Then there was about a half a dozen or so men in striped uniforms just wandering around. I mean, it was like they were in a daze. I don't know how we—I don't know. I don't remember that we knew much about concentration camps and all or not.

We went in—the first day we went into the camp, I went in as a stretcher-bearer. They'd just spray us, so we all were grey-headed there for a couple of months, spraying us. They'd spray us down the back of our neck and all.

And there was dead—there was an open grave on our side that they were putting about a thousand to two thousand bodies in. We had to drive right by it going out. And they had Germans standing in the bottom of the pit stacking bodies. And I remember one time the—a lot of times people's eyes would be opened, and it looked like that they were staring at you. I don't know how many of those graves that they had. I think some of them might have even been up to four thousand in a grave.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
September 14, 2011*

I mean, it was like they were in a daze.



BIRNEY T. "CHICK" HAVEY

I noticed the stink. It's a stench. But that wasn't from the gas ovens - just human stench. Death stench. There were three hundred railcars full of dead, and they all looked the same. They had their striped suits on, and they just died in there, starved to death.

Those that could walk, they were like walking skeletons. You can't believe that a person can walk that thin. Some of them brought some cans that they had gotten out of the German soldiers' canteen, you know, like our number-ten cans—and we spent a long time opening those cans. In fact, that bayonet—I wore my hands out cutting cans open. We didn't have can openers or anything. But it was for hours.

The other thing is that each one of those prisoners had a bucket or a can and that was their duty bag. That's

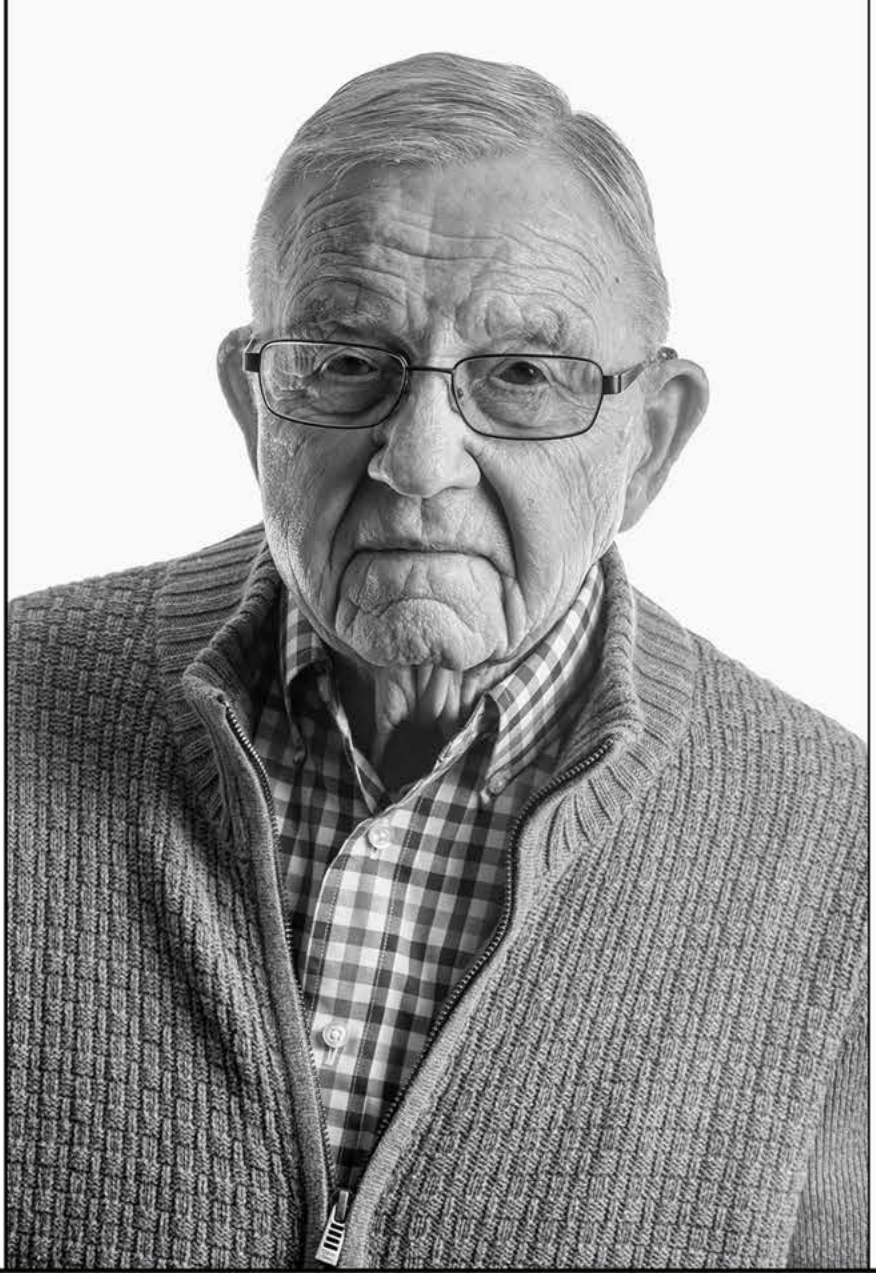
what they carried. They ate out of it, they shit in it, they peed in it, and they didn't have any place to wash it. The privation that he [Hitler] inflicted — or they [the Germans] inflicted — because there were plenty of people to blame. Because you know, a blind man would see what was going on.

Some of the things that you don't realize—it always makes you wonder how could human beings do that to human beings? But worse than killing is the deprivation that he inflicted upon those people by starving them to death. The misery over years and years and years. I haven't ever come to grips with it.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
May 30, 2012*

*They had their striped suits on, and they
just died in there, starved to death.*

RAYMOND STEWART WATSON



I went through [Buchenwald]. I went through it. They had a lot of steel doors and stuff. You can see from some of the pictures we had that they stacked the bodies. They were just stacking up. They'd have them facing one direction on the first layer. The next layer, they'd turn them around forty-five degrees, and then they'd go up about five stacks high. And they were—I couldn't count how many people that were just—just dead. And every one of them were skin and bones. It was awful. I mean, the odor was bad and—well, you just didn't think a human could treat humans like that.

But that was awful. I mean, anybody that saw that—it's something you don't ever want to see again.

I mean, that many people just stacked up dead, and skin and bones to begin with.

I didn't think... human beings could treat other human beings that way. I really didn't. But—well, it's hard to say. I think a lot of people either said, "Well, you know, it didn't happen," or—even Germans, or what have you. But I think it was—I don't know that just the basic people were much different than over here. I mean, a lot of them just didn't pay any attention to really what was happening. And I think I see that over here from time to time. But I think they got a real eye-opener.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Stephen M. Sloan
April 5, 2012*

*I didn't think... human beings could treat
other human beings that way.*

LEE H. BERG



Well, I saw, I saw people without clothes on. Dead. Stacked up. The odor was just, you can't imagine human beings living or being treated that way. I mean, it's hard to visualize how anybody, anybody, I mean you possibly think that beasts live like that, but it's utterly impossible in your mind to think that one human being would do that to another human being. I mean it's just something that you — I don't know how to explain it.

I mean, I think the odor is what made me sicker than anything else. I mean I saw the bodies. Of course, I had seen bodies in war or that had been decaying and all of that, but I had never, I had never smelled anything like that before. I looked around me and I

said, "My God — how can you treat people this way? Or why do you treat people this way? I mean, you don't treat animals like this." Sure, sure, I knew who they were — [Jewish people]. But at the time, I don't know... I think that was my first realization what this war was all about.

But me being the only Jewish officer, I think it possibly affected me more than it did anybody else. Or I felt it did. Maybe... I think I grew up at this point. I think up to that time I'd been very... But when I saw that, it ages you. It ages you mentally and physically.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Ronnie Morgan
May 2, 1994*

*I had seen bodies in war or
that had been decaying and all of that, but
I had never, I had never smelled anything
like that before.*



JOHNNIE MEZA MARINO

When we marched into this area, we [saw] people stacked like cord wood, others in railroad cars and a few yards from there a huge ditch-type ravine where other people were thrown in.

Everybody was dead. There was no life whatsoever. It was totally; it didn't seem like real. So many people – hundred, just hundreds of people, just lying there. Most of them with their eyes open staring up at the sky. I thought I had seen war, death, ...but I never, never was prepared to witness something like Hadamar.

I have asked my Lord to take it off my mind, but I see them today as I saw them then, especially the children. God forbid that in the future there will be...so much anguish, suffering to a human being. It's inhuman.

The only thing that I regret is that we didn't get there in time to save all..., we should have.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Ellen Trachtenberg
April 17, 1995*

*I have asked my Lord to take
it off my mind, but I see them
today as I saw them then,
especially the children.*

A.I. SCHEPPS



During this fast moving period in the final days of the war, one of our objectives was Flossenburg. This proved to be one of Germany's terrible concentration camps (I call them prisons). When I arrived, I saw well the hell prisoners there suffered. I saw a number of freshly shot bodies. I saw the treacherous huts with stacked and crowded bunks. In one area, I saw a stack of shoes. Before leaving, a man in striped clothes showed up. His German and my Jewish language (Yiddish) served a good purpose.

We could converse. He told me that just before we arrived the Germans had marched all able bodied prisoners to the east. Any one who could not walk well was shot. He had hidden. He showed me the whipping stock where prisoners were punished. I had picked up a small German camera earlier, and I took some pictures there before leaving.

*He told me that just before
we arrived the Germans
had marched all able
bodied prisoners to the
east. Any one who could
not walk well was shot.*



JESSE G. REYES

I wanted to go out there and fight for my country!

When I realized the atrocities that they were committing...I said, "these people are evil...

I've got to go fight them."

I was in combat...from January up 'til the end of the war... in three campaigns; [in] the Ardennes, Central Europe, and the Rhineland.

I...finally got to Germany...and...liberated a cinerary camp from the Dachau concentration camp system north of Munich. Our tanks broke the...gate and out spilled all of these...prisoners of war.

They looked like...skeletons, walking skeletons. I don't see how they could walk! They're...like walking skeletons...with a little flesh on them. Their eye sockets real deep and their cheeks all sunken. It made me feel awful. War is something, it's the worst of mankind.

*Excerpt from an interview conducted by Jesus Jesse Esparza
March 19, 2015*

*When I realized the atrocities that
they were committing...I said,
"these people are evil...I've got to
go fight them."*

OTTO SCHLAMME



Otto Schlamme had a powerful story to tell about World War II, beginning with his departure from Germany as a 14-year-old boy, through his return to Germany just a few years later as a liberator of Nazi death camps. He had fled From Wurtzburg in a hay wagon, four days before Kristallnacht—the Night of Broken Glass—in November of 1938. His family left nearly everything behind.

He landed with his mother and father and sister in Houston, Texas. Barely speaking English, they knew no one outside of the kind family that sponsored them. They were starting their lives over again.

Five years later Otto became a U.S. citizen and immediately enlisted in the U.S. Army. He was a

member of Patton's Army and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. Later he was in the lead jeep (as an interpreter) when entering the Ohrdruf concentration camp, the first Nazi camp to be liberated by U.S. troops.

After Otto retired, he traveled around Texas for many years giving lectures on the Holocaust to school children of all ages. He clearly had a story to tell. The key lesson my father learned, and later taught, was to not remain silent and to use your voice.

Susan Massin, daughter of Otto Schlamme

If the good people don't do anything, that's the answer to how the Holocaust happened. Good people sat by and didn't do anything.

HAROLD B. WELCH



As the war neared its end, they found themselves in Nordhausen, Germany, site of the Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp. ...He was among the first wave of troops to enter the camp, sent to render aid and to witness what had happened at Mittelbau-Dora.

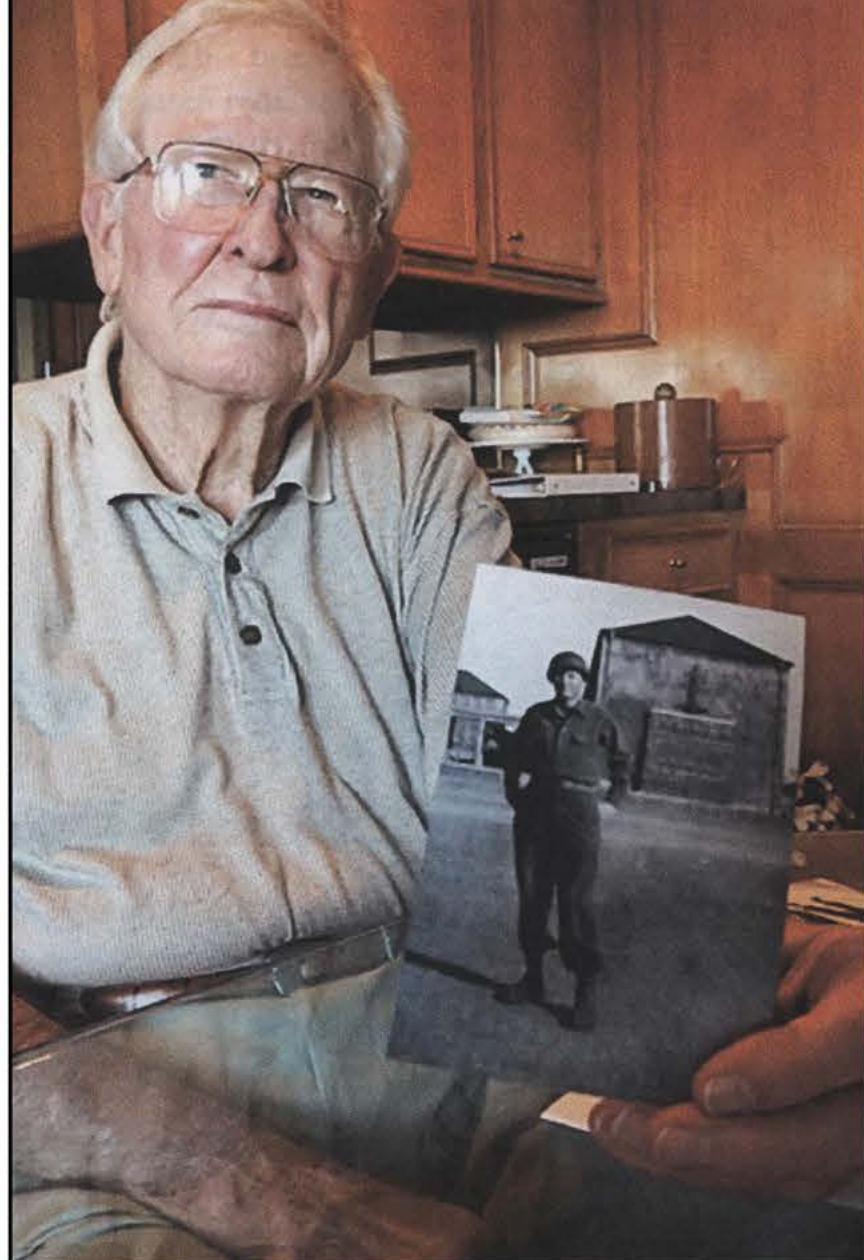
...He finally arrived home in January of 1946. Along with his meager gear, he carried with him eight tiny two-by-three-inch photos from... the Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp. Mother kept them along with some letters in an old latch-top cigar box. As a child, I used to take them out one by one and examine them, holding them up to the light to study the tiny images

frozen in time by the camera's lens, trying to decipher them. They were pictures of row upon row of bodies of the dead, some bloated, some so skeletal that they were little more than bones with the last remnants of skin stretched over them, stark white, sunken torsos in which you could count every rib.

...Yet Daddy did not talk about Nordhausen. Once every year or two, when the three of us would open the box of photos, he could not bring himself to say a single word.

Excerpt from Laura Bush, Spoken from the Heart (Scribner, 2010).

...Yet Daddy did not talk about Nordhausen. Once every year or two, when the three of us would open the box of photos, he could not bring himself to say a single word.



GERALD POWELL

The saddest situation we experienced was at Nordhausen where we liberated a concentration camp. Normally the camp had contained about 25,000 inmates. At the time we arrived there were about 6,000 men of which 5,000 were dead. The living were all near death; they had been starved and beaten. There was an underground factory in which the inmates worked to build V-1 buzz bombs, the pilotless bomb and the V-2 rocket, both were used to bomb Britain and targets such as Antwerp and Liege, Belgium.

Excerpt from an essay written by Gerald Powell, 2012.

*At the time we arrived there were about
6,000 men of which 5,000 were dead.
The living were all near death; they had
been starved and beaten.*

A

Salomon Abrego	•	Laredo	•	Buchenwald
Floyd C. Adams	•	Graford Pampa	•	Landsberg
Glen Adams	•	Richmond	•	Dachau
Wilfred Agold	•	Boerne Comfort	•	Landsberg
Giles Albritton, Jr.	•	Lufkin	•	Landsberg
Sam Alexander	•	Breckenridge	•	Magdeburg
Vernon Alexander	•	Amarillo	•	Landsberg
John W. Allen	•	Alto Lamar County	•	Dachau
Raymond Solon Allen	•	Hallettsville Houston	•	Hurlach
Terry De La Mesa Allen	•	El Paso	•	Dora-Mittelbau
Charles Ray Allman	•	Runnels County Mabank	•	Dachau
Vincent Amato	•	Huntsville	•	Landsberg
Drennan S. Anderson	•	Big Spring	•	Magdeburg
James S. Anderson	•	Tuff Fredericksburg	•	Magdeburg
Robert P. Anderson	•	Lubbock	•	Meitingen
Dave Andres	•	Dallas	•	Ohrdruf
Adolfo Anzaldua	•	Hidalgo Dallas	•	Dachau
Ubaldo Arizmendi	•	Brownsville	•	Dachau
William W. Ashby, Jr.	•	Houston	•	Buchenwald
Neal Axelrod	•	El Paso	•	Dachau

B

Magdaleno P. Baeza	•	El Paso	•	Dachau
Pedro P. Baeza	•	El Paso	•	Dachau
Joseph Baily, Jr.	•	Seagoville	•	Dachau
Jesse L. Baker	•	Wichita Falls	•	Landsberg
Jack Barnes	•	Cisco Hurst	•	Attendorn
Otis Barnes	•	Port Neches Groves	•	Mühldorf
Meryl Barnett	•	Borger	•	Dachau

Lenzy A. Barrington	•	Bloomburg	•	Magdeburg
Paul K. Barron	•	San Antonio	•	Landsberg
Albert Henry Bartschmid, Jr.	•	Marshall Buchanan Dam	•	Dachau
Tony J. Bashinski	•	Bremond Houston	•	Landsberg
Rudolf Baum	•	Dallas	•	Buchenwald
Azzie Lee Bell, Jr.	•	Buckholts Richmond	•	Dachau
Louis Belsky	•	El Paso	•	Dora-Mittelbau
J.B. Belvin	•	Greenwood Dallas	•	Landsberg
Sam Benegas	•	Mission	•	Dachau
William Benson	•	Colorado City Wylie	•	Landsberg
Lee Berg	•	Dallas	•	Dachau
Walter I. Berlin	•	El Paso	•	Nordhausen
Abe Bernstein	•	Houston	•	Landsberg
Harry Bernstein	•	Fort Worth	•	Risiera di San Sabba
Phillip Bernstein	•	Fort Worth	•	Mauthausen
Charles Bickle	•	San Antonio Nixon	•	Landsberg
Albert Binko	•	Dallas	•	Landsberg
John W. Birdwell	•	Bryson Fort Worth	•	Dachau
Nathan Birhbaum	•	El Paso	•	Nordhausen
Edward L. Bischoff	•	Sealy Richmond	•	Landsberg
Sidney Blum	•	El Paso	•	Dachau
Herbert M. Blumenthal	•	El Paso	•	Dachau
Hardy Boullion	•	Liberty	•	Magdeburg
William Bowie	•	Brenham Dallas	•	Dachau
Paul Bowlin	•	El Paso	•	Nordhausen
Roy A. Bracher	•	Brenham Houston	•	Dachau
A. G. Pete Bramble	•	Dallas	•	Landsberg
Gorman G. Brewer	•	Jasper Beaumont	•	Landsberg
Reuben Brody	•	El Paso	•	Kaufering

Billie Wallace Brooke	•	Mineola Littlefield	•	Landsberg
Charles Brosseau	•	San Antonio Dallas	•	Ohrdruf
Gerard E. Bruson	•	El Paso	•	Gunskirchen
Dale Allan Bryhan	•	Weslaco	•	Landsberg
Ray Buchanan	•	Mount Pleasant	•	Dachau
George William Burnett	•	Manchester Kerrville	•	Dachau
Royce Edwin Burton	•	Tyler Nacogdoches	•	Dachau
Werner Busse	•	Brenham Llano	•	Dachau

C

Lester R. Calhoun	•	Holland Texas City	•	Landsberg
Manuel Camarillo	•	El Paso	•	Buchenwald Flossenbürg
Wilson Canafax	•	Millsap Fort Worth	•	Buchenwald
Allen B. Canfield	•	Dallas	•	Landsberg
Walter Wilcox Cardwell, Jr.	•	Lockhart College Station	•	Dora-Mittelbau
Isaac W. Carey	•	Gilmer Forney	•	Landsberg
Joseph Carl Carlson, Jr.	•	El Campo Houston	•	Nordhausen
Thomas Carlson	•	Bosque County Waco	•	Magdeburg
Jay Carpenter	•	El Paso	•	Dachau
Grover Carr	•	Royse City Houston	•	Dachau (witness)
Robert Burnie Carson	•	San Antonio	•	Dachau
Lillian Carter	•	El Paso Houston	•	Dachau
Henry O. Case	•	Cleveland Conroe	•	Landsberg
Loarn Eicaney Cavner	•	Houston	•	Dachau
Otis Oran Cavness	•	Cherokee Austin	•	Dachau
Altheus B. Chancy	•	Houston	•	Landsberg
C. A. Chanet	•	Dallas	•	Dachau
Thomas Christian	•	Richland Springs San Angelo	•	Dachau

Kenneth Christopherson	•	El Paso Mansfield	•	Dora-Mittelbau
Albert Clauser	•	Grand Prairie	•	Landsberg
Courts Cleveland, Jr.	•	Acton Granbury	•	Hohenwarth
John R. Cogan	•	Houston	•	Ohrdruf
David Cohen	•	San Antonio	•	Buchenwald Ohrdruf
Michael P. Cokinos	•	Beaumont	•	Halberstadt- Zwieberge
Johnny Collett	•	Dallas	•	Landsberg
Glynn Curtis Collins, Sr.	•	Wilmer Arlington	•	Dachau
Lee D. Combs	•	Houston	•	Landsberg
Herman R. Cortez	•	Victoria Houston	•	Spergau
Rupert Costlow	•	Henderson Joinerville	•	Dachau
Anthony H. Couch	•	San Antonio	•	Landsberg
William A. Craig	•	Pittsburg Marshall	•	Nordhausen
Frederick J. Cramer	•	El Paso	•	Buchenwald
Richard J. Cramer	•	Dallas	•	Buchenwald
Julius H. Craver	•	Yantis Sulphur Springs	•	Landsberg
Arthur W. Crawford	•	Dawson Tyler	•	Landsberg
Robert E. Crawley	•	Irving	•	Landsberg
Charles J. Croley	•	Gilmer Wichita Falls	•	Magdeburg
William H. Crone	•	Wood County Mineola	•	Landsberg
Harry M. Crouse	•	Helotes	•	Dachau
Martin G. Crutsinger	•	Locker San Saba	•	Landsberg
Grover Cunningham	•	San Antonio	•	Landsberg
James John Cupples	•	Dallas	•	Dachau

D

Floyd Dade, Jr.	•	Texarkana	•	Gunskirchen
William Danner	•	El Paso	•	Nordhausen

Thomas D'Aquino	•	Dallas	•	Dachau
Roy B. Darrow	•	Seguin San Antonio	•	Landsberg
Alfred W. Davis, Jr.	•	Wichita Falls Bryan	•	Dachau
Jesse Paul Davis	•	Devine Sandia	•	Unknown (multiple camps)
John Dettling, Sr.	•	Angleton Wharton	•	Buchenwald Ohrdruf
Peter De Wetter	•	El Paso	•	Buchenwald
Myron I. Dickey, Jr.	•	Houston Mount Enterprise	•	Kaufering
Harry Digenthal	•	Garland	•	Dachau
William G. Dippo, Jr.	•	San Antonio	•	Mauthausen
James Monroe Donaghey, Jr.	•	Anson Hamlin	•	Magdeburg
Roland B. Dorman	•	Midway Madisonville	•	Dachau
Alfred Casper Dotson, Jr.	•	Mineral Wells	•	Dachau
Douglas Doud	•	Brownwood Kennedale	•	Dachau
Trenton Dowdle, Sr.	•	Coolidge Garland	•	Gusen Mauthausen
Albert Duncan	•	Dallas	•	Nordhausen
Robert Dunstan	•	Dallas	•	Dachau
Richard Earl Dusek	•	Lamesa Clyde	•	Gardelegen
Hubert L. Dycus	•	Rotan	•	Landsberg

E

Constantine Eagan	•	Wimberley	•	Wöbbelin
Robert L. Eaton	•	Comanche Trinidad	•	Landsberg
Roy Eaton	•	Houston	•	Landsberg
Olav E. Eidbo	•	El Paso	•	Gunskirchen Lager
Dwight D. Eisenhower	•	Denison	•	Ohrdruf
Marie Knowles Ellifritz	•	El Paso	•	Linz Mauthausen
Frank R. Elliot	•	Baylor County Abilene	•	Landsberg
Robert Ellis	•	Houston	•	Ohrdruf

William L. Ellis	•	Houston	•	Landsberg
William T. Epperson	•	Trinity Dallas	•	Dachau
Joe William Evans	•	Long Branch Georgetown	•	Ampfing Schwabigg
Bert Phillips Ezell	•	Holland Dallas	•	Ohrdruf

F

Julius Feinstein	•	Houston	•	Landsberg
Walter J. Fellenz	•	San Antonio	•	Dachau
George X. Ferguson	•	Dallas	•	Dachau
Guillermo Fernandez	•	El Paso	•	Dachau
Randel Zepeda Fernández	•	El Paso	•	Dachau
Edwin Barry Ferrell, Sr.	•	Aspermont Midland	•	Landsberg
L. H. Ferris	•	Truscott Muleshoe	•	Landsberg
Ishmael M. Ferry	•	San Antonio	•	Magdeburg
John Estle Fielding	•	Petty Paris	•	Gardelegen
Reynaldo Fierro	•	El Paso	•	Dachau
Walter H. Fisher	•	Houston	•	Landsberg
Alton Leslie Fitzgerald	•	Hale County Knox City	•	Dachau
John W. Flickinger	•	El Paso	•	Heidelberg
Armando Flores	•	El Paso	•	Dachau
Arthur M. Flynn	•	Houston	•	Landsberg
Charles H. Flynn, Jr.	•	Houston	•	Landsberg
Thomas C. Foley	•	Dallas Wichita Falls	•	Landsberg
Geronimo Fragua	•	El Paso	•	Dachau
Ann Franklin	•	Houston	•	Dachau
Reynold F. Franze	•	Kurten Bryan	•	Buchenwald
Ralph V. Fry	•	Abilene	•	Landsberg
Milford Tipton Fullerton, Jr.	•	Midlothian	•	Salzwedel
Dennis Fulwell	•	Harlingen	•	Landsberg

G

Murray Gaile	•	El Paso	•	Landsberg
Santiago Galaviz, Sr.	•	El Paso	•	Nordhausen
Ralph Galvan, Jr.	•	San Antonio Corpus Christi	•	Dachau
Sam Galvan	•	Corpus Christi	•	Dora-Mittelbau
Lewis Everett Gammon	•	Houston	•	Nordhausen
Jesus R. Garcia	•	El Paso	•	Landsberg
Donald K. Garcy	•	El Paso	•	Nordhausen
Glenn R. Gardner	•	Vigo Park Canyon	•	Dachau
Mark Geeslin	•	Goldthwaite Lubbock	•	Mauthausen
Charles E. Gentry	•	Erath Ennis	•	Buchenwald
Nelson A. Geron	•	Sweetwater	•	Landsberg
Joe Warren Gill	•	Canyon	•	Itter Castle
Thomas S. Gillis, Jr.	•	Fort Worth Houston	•	Ohrdruf
Arthur E. Goddard	•	Houston	•	Dachau
Fredrick W. Goldsmith	•	Dallas	•	DP Transport
Lorenzo B. Gonzalez	•	El Paso	•	Dachau
Durward B. Gossett	•	Rusk Denison	•	Dachau
Richard Gottlieb	•	Dallas Houston	•	Dachau
Raymond E. Gray	•	Point	•	Landsberg
Edgar M. Greaves	•	Coleman County	•	Itter Castle Landsberg
Raymond R. Greaves	•	Coleman County	•	Itter Castle Landsberg
James Franklin Greene, Jr.	•	San Antonio	•	Buchenwald
Robert Greenwood	•	Van Zandt Tyler	•	Dachau
Francis H. Gregg	•	Amarillo	•	Dachau
Jerry M. Gregg	•	Spicewood Austin	•	Unknown camp
Lloyd N. Groce	•	Houston	•	Landsberg

Helen Groesbeck	•	Austin	•	Gusen Mauthausen
Wirt T. Grover	•	Pickton	•	Dachau
Francisco J. Guerra	•	Laredo	•	Dachau
Carlos Guzman Guerrero	•	Lockhart South Austin	•	Flossenbürg
Lynn Henry Guilloud	•	Pottsboro Dallas	•	Ohrdruf
Jack Arthur Gulyas	•	El Paso	•	Mauthausen
Carroll Eugene Gustafson	•	Manor Austin	•	Dachau

H

Norm Haley	•	El Paso	•	Dachau
Clifford L. Hamilton	•	El Paso	•	Dachau
Samuel M. Harrington	•	Grapevine Dallas	•	Dachau
Jesse E. Harris	•	Houston	•	Magdeburg
Raymond E. Harris	•	Rogers Temple	•	Kaufering
J. Ted Hartman	•	Lubbock	•	Buchenwald Mauthausen
Sherman Tecumseh Hatchel	•	Nacogdoches Nederland	•	Dachau
Birney T. Havey	•	Seabrook	•	Dachau
Horace Eugene Hawkins	•	Johntown Texas City	•	Dachau
A. C. Hays, Jr.	•	Dimmitt Sanger	•	Landsberg
Louis Heidelberger	•	El Paso	•	Nordhausen
Noel Ray Henkell	•	Ballinger	•	Stalag III-B
Edgar J. Henyan	•	Seymour Lubbock	•	Landsberg
Edgar F. Herbst, Jr.	•	Kirbyville Houston	•	Magdeburg
Ramon Herrera	•	El Paso	•	Maribor
Andrew W. Hewitt	•	Austin	•	Landsberg
Sydney Hilder	•	Houston	•	Dachau
Hence J. Hill	•	Shamrock Dallas	•	Buchenwald
Charles Hoelscher	•	Lavaca County Alice	•	Landsberg
Morris M. Hoffman	•	Navasota	•	Dachau

Clifton Bernard Hohensee	•	Rowena Wall	•	Mauthausen
Vernon L. Hosbrook	•	El Paso	•	Mauthausen
Louis Clinton Hudson, Jr.	•	Somerville Bryan	•	Wöbbelin
James Lecil Huffines, Jr.	•	Mexia Lewisville	•	Ebensee
Yvonne G. Humphrey	•	Beaumont	•	Dachau
William L. Hunter	•	Fairfield	•	Dachau
Willie Joe Hunter	•	Merkel	•	Landsberg

J

Harold Jayroe	•	Osage Dallas	•	Landsberg
Paul James Jenkins	•	Campbellton Austin	•	Dachau
Thomas Jimenez	•	San Antonio	•	Gunskirchen
James Melvin Johnson	•	Huntsville Houston	•	Ohrdruf
Carlis D. Jones	•	Dallas	•	Landsberg
Clarence E. Jones	•	San Saba	•	Landsberg
Donnie M. Jones	•	Athens Port Arthur	•	Landsberg
John P. Jones	•	Houston Gainesville	•	Landsberg
John Paul Jones	•	Austin	•	Landsberg
S. Frank Jones	•	Tyler	•	Dachau
Herman Josephs	•	San Antonio Corpus Christi	•	Dachau
Robert E. Jud	•	Galveston Marble Falls	•	Dachau

K

Lawrence Jay Kaplan	•	El Paso	•	Buchenwald
Sam Kesner	•	Dallas	•	Dachau
Oscar L. Kimbell	•	Briscoe Lubbock	•	Buchenwald
David Klawsky	•	El Paso	•	Gunskirchen
Clemens O. Klein	•	Fredericksburg	•	Landsberg
Walter E. Knapp	•	El Paso	•	Auschwitz
Audavee B. Knox	•	Abilene Bomarton	•	Landsberg

Samuel M. Kogutt	•	Bay City Dallas	•	Flossenbürg
John William Kongable	•	Friendswood	•	Buchenwald Ohrdruf
Ralph Krieger	•	Abilene	•	Dachau
Kermit Lee Krueger	•	New Ulm Rosenberg	•	Dachau
Arndell R. Kunshick	•	Bastrop Del Rio	•	Landsberg
George Kveton	•	Sweetwater Rockport	•	Landsberg
L				
Ben Lane	•	Vernon Houston	•	Mauthausen
Ernest Keith Langford	•	Bryan College Station	•	Dachau
Vernon W. Langley	•	Clyde Big Spring	•	Landsberg
Eva LaRae	•	El Paso	•	Landsberg Schongau
Mark S. Larson	•	San Antonio	•	Landsberg
Henry LaRue	•	Mexia	•	Landsberg
Olan R. Lathrop	•	Houston Polk County	•	Landsberg
Johnny Lawhon	•	Wharton Freeport	•	Dachau Mauthausen
L. J. Leath	•	Electra	•	Dachau
John P. Lee	•	Dallas	•	Dachau
Joseph V. Lee	•	Odessa	•	Dachau
Robert Lee	•	Dallas Plano	•	Landsberg
Jerome Leibs	•	Dallas	•	Dachau
Walter A. Leigon	•	Morgan Houston	•	Landsberg
Joe G. Lerma	•	El Paso	•	Werl
Julian A. Lerner	•	Galveston Dallas	•	Kaufering Landsberg
Walter J. Levermann	•	San Juan San Antonio	•	Dachau
Mort Levitan	•	Dallas	•	Dachau
Fred Levy	•	Dallas	•	Landsberg

Maurice Louis Levy	•	Terrell Dallas	•	Dachau
Eugene B. Lewis	•	Galveston	•	Dachau
Sigmund Liberman	•	Plano	•	Nordhausen
Felix Longoria	•	Skidmore Corpus Christi	•	Leipzig-Schönefeld
Jose Angel Lopez	•	Jourdanton Houston	•	Buchenwald
Rene Lopez	•	Mission McAllen	•	Kaufering
Ben Love	•	Vernon Houston	•	Mauthausen
Doyce H. Lyles	•	Garland	•	Landsberg
William Ray Lynch, Jr.	•	Madisonville Huntsville	•	Hurlach

M

Alvino N. Machado	•	San Antonio	•	Landsberg
Frederick Bernhard Machol	•	Houston	•	Dachau Volary
Ralph Mackenzie	•	Dallas	•	Dachau
R. E. Madrey	•	Weatherford Big Springs	•	Landsberg
Harlin Lloyd Magee	•	Beaumont Blanco	•	Dachau
James Mahoney	•	Austin	•	Multiple camps
Ed Malouf	•	Dallas	•	Ohrdruf
John Manning	•	DeSoto	•	Landsberg
Stanley Marcus	•	El Paso	•	Flossenbürg
Isadore A. Margolis	•	El Paso	•	Weferlingen Buchenwald
Johnnie Meza Marino	•	Colorado Houston	•	Hadamar Kaufering
Samuel Joseph Martin, Jr.	•	Midland	•	Dachau
Ascension Martinez	•	Lorena	•	Ebensee
Ernesto Pedregon Martinez	•	El Paso	•	Dora-Mittelbau
Ernesto S. Martinez	•	Cameron San Antonio	•	Nordhausen Sachsenhausen
Juan S. Martinez	•	La Grulla El Paso	•	Unknown camp

Reyes C. Martinez	•	San Antonio	•	Magdeburg
Calvin Massey	•	Tomball	•	Landsberg
Henry J. Mattero	•	Houston	•	Buchenwald
Alex M. McAdams	•	Romayor Cleveland	•	Magdeburg
Odell W. McBee	•	Milburn Mercury	•	Landsberg
John L. McConn	•	Houston	•	Dachau
Henry McDonnell	•	San Antonio	•	Unknown camp
Richard L. McDowell	•	El Paso	•	Magdeburg
Patrick McEnroe, Jr.	•	Houston Port O'Connor	•	Buchenwald
William Allen McKenzie	•	Houston Dallas	•	Buchenwald
Ellen (Richards) McKitrick	•	Houston	•	Dachau
Jack McMahan	•	Whitney Oak Hill	•	Ohrdruf
Robert McMenamin	•	Abilene	•	Landsberg
Chester McNamara	•	El Paso	•	Ohrdruf
Everett Daniel McWhorter	•	Zack Lipan	•	Dachau
James A. Meehan	•	San Antonio	•	Landsberg
Guillermo Mendez	•	Brownsville Conroe	•	Dachau
Jose Mendez	•	Corpus Christi	•	Unknown camp
James D. Menefee	•	Tatum Tyler	•	Landsberg
J.K. Milam	•	Circle Back Tulia	•	Unknown camp
Zohn Solomon Milam	•	Eliasville Graham	•	Landsberg
Gerd Miller	•	San Antonio	•	Dachau Ebensee Mauthausen
Henry Mireles, Jr.	•	Beaumont San Antonio	•	Dachau
Donald L. Mitcham	•	Buckholts Houston	•	Dachau
Byron F. Moody	•	Weatherford Dallas	•	Landsberg
Jerry B. Morgan	•	Midland	•	Dachau
Mary Elizabeth Morris	•	Allen	•	Dachau
Hyatt W. Moser	•	El Paso	•	Hadamar

Avis Mott	•	Orange	•	Magdeburg
Arland B. Musser	•	Houston	•	Dachau

N

Edward Benjamin Nathan	•	San Antonio	•	Dachau
Quentin F. Naumann	•	Houston	•	Dachau
Howard C. Neeper	•	San Antonio	•	Landsberg
John Nelson	•	Milam El Paso	•	Ohrdruf
Joe V. Nemec	•	Williamson City Rockport	•	Magdeburg
Myers Newman	•	Henderson Fort Worth	•	Landsberg
James D. Newton	•	Lubbock	•	Buchenwald Langenstein
Edmundo Nieto	•	Presidio	•	Landsberg

O

Charles E. Oates	•	Houston	•	Landsberg
John W. Odell	•	Houston	•	Landsberg
Marvin Bob Osborn	•	Gatesville	•	Dachau
Thomas F. Osborne	•	San Antonio	•	Landsberg
Curtis K. Owen	•	McMahan Lockhart	•	Dachau
Tom H. Owen	•	Leonard Richardson	•	Dachau

P

Alfonso Pacheco	•	Brownsville	•	Landsberg
Gerald Willard Parker	•	Kerens San Antonio	•	Dachau
Jerry J. Paulicek	•	Schulenberg	•	Landsberg
Alvin Pearson	•	Pecan ---	•	Landsberg
Robert C. Pearson	•	Houston	•	Ohrdruf
Albert Pena, Jr.	•	Cotulla San Antonio	•	Kaufering
Jose M. Perez, Jr.	•	El Paso	•	Landsberg
Charles C. Pervier	•	Houston	•	Dachau

Phil Peterson	•	Dallas	•	Leipzig-Thekla
William Bryant Phelps	•	Gonzales San Antonio	•	Mauthausen
Thomas C. Pickens, Jr.	•	Houston	•	Buchenwald
Herbert O. Pinno	•	Dallas Fort Worth	•	Landsberg
J.D. Pittman	•	Carbon Eastland	•	Landsberg
Robert H. Pohlman	•	Houston	•	Landsberg
Ted Pohrte	•	DeSoto	•	Mauthausen Ohrdruf
John T. Poole	•	Port Arthur Houston	•	Kaufering
Emilio Portales	•	D'Hanis	•	Dachau
Emillio Portales	•	San Antonio	•	Dachau
David H. Porter, Jr.	•	Houston	•	Mauthausen
Ferris Pounds	•	Newcastle	•	Dachau
Gerald Powell	•	Hunt County Horseshoe Bay	•	Dora-Mittelbau Nordhausen
Robert Neal Powers	•	Woodlands	•	Landsberg
John Prezas	•	Corpus Christi	•	Dachau
Lee Price	•	Houston	•	Landsberg
Manuel M. Prieto	•	El Paso Houston	•	Buchenwald
Phillip M. Prieto	•	El Paso Hockley	•	Nordhausen Ohrdruf
William Pritchett	•	Stamford Abilene	•	Dachau
Alfred M. Proschko	•	Shiner Yoakum	•	Dachau
L. W. Puckitt	•	London San Angelo	•	Buchenwald

R

Paul U. Ramirez	•	San Antonio	•	Dachau
Fred F. Randolph	•	Wichita Falls	•	Dachau
Joseph S. Ratley	•	Tyler Marshall	•	Landsberg
Francis Ruble Reese, Jr.	•	Houston	•	Itter Castle

Jesus Reyes	•	Houston	•	Unknown camp
John Ferguson Reynolds	•	Dallas	•	Nordhausen
Harold Andrew Ricards, Jr.	•	Houston	•	Buchenwald
Bill Jones Rice	•	Kaufman Amarillo	•	Dachau
Lloyd Riedner	•	San Antonio	•	Landsberg
Everett Riggs	•	Texline	•	Landsberg
Crisoforo D. Rivera	•	Da Costa Victoria	•	Dora-Mittelbau
Salvador Rivera	•	El Paso	•	Volary
Charles R. Rodgers	•	Ingram Bandera	•	Landsberg
Lawrence Rodney Rodgers	•	Houston	•	Dachau
Tony Rodriquez	•	San Antonio	•	Landsberg
Harold Rogers	•	Hillsboro Waco	•	Dachau
William E. Rogers	•	Dallas Center	•	Dachau
Chester F. Rohn, Jr.	•	McKinney	•	Mauthausen
Joseph Ignatius Romano	•	Friendswood Missouri City	•	Dachau
Robert E. Rosales	•	San Antonio	•	Landsberg
Albert G. Rosenberg	•	El Paso	•	Buchenwald
Charles E. Rosenbloom	•	Galveston	•	Dachau
Alice Roth	•	El Paso	•	Dachau
Tom Rourke	•	DeSoto	•	Dachau
Wayne Rowden	•	Azle Brownfield	•	Gunskirchen
Gordon Rowe	•	Dallas Horseshoe Bay	•	Dachau
Felipe T. Roybal	•	El Paso	•	Wöbbelin
Edwin Rusteberg	•	Brownsville	•	Dachau

S

Willie Sabrsula	•	Beasley El Paso	•	Gunskirchen
Julien David Saks	•	Houston	•	Landsberg
Harold Joseph Salfen	•	Irving	•	Buchenwald

Edward Worthington Samuell, Jr.	•	Dallas	•	Gunskirchen
Richard E. Sanders	•	Palacios Houston	•	Landsberg
George H. Sanger, Jr.	•	Nolan El Paso	•	Landsberg
Edmond Sarola	•	San Antonio	•	Landsberg
Arthur A. Sauer	•	Houston	•	Landsberg
Alvin A. Sauls	•	Wolfe City Clarksville	•	Dachau
Adolph Sawyer	•	Marathon San Antonio	•	Landsberg
Alvin Issie Schepps	•	Houston	•	Flossenbürg
Grover Cleveland Schildknecht, Jr.	•	Dallas San Antonio	•	Dachau
Otto Schlamme	•	Houston	•	Ohrdruf
Seburn Schmittou	•	Jack County	•	Dachau
LeRoy A. Schriner	•	Galveston	•	Landsberg
Aulton J. Schubert	•	Caldwell Lockhart	•	Magdeburg
Duane C. Schue	•	Plano	•	Dachau
Albert Schwartz	•	El Paso	•	Nordhausen
Ira E. Scott	•	Port Arthur College Station	•	Dachau
Jerry Scott	•	Gregg County	•	Dachau
J.D. Seay	•	Luling	•	Landsberg
Frank Sellers	•	San Antonio	•	Landsberg
Joseph Sgroi	•	El Paso	•	Dachau
James F. Shafer	•	Burnet Athens	•	Buchenwald
Newt A. Shanklin, Jr.	•	San Antonio	•	Landsberg
John Howard Shipp, Jr.	•	De Kalb Red Lick	•	Landsberg
Arthur H. Simpkins	•	Buda	•	Landsberg
Joseph Simpson	•	West Fort Worth	•	Salzwedel
Ike G. Slafka	•	Bremond Marlin	•	Magdeburg
James C. Smith	•	Dallas	•	Landsberg

Wilburn R. Smith	•	Jacksonville	•	Magdeburg
Winburne J. Smith	•	Holland Maypearl	•	Landsberg
Jacob Sneiderman	•	San Antonio	•	Wöbbelin
Sidney Snyder	•	El Paso	•	Nordhausen
Edmund Sorola	•	San Antonio	•	Dachau
Felix Laurence Sparks	•	San Antonio	•	Dachau
Cecil A. Spears	•	Beaumont	•	Dachau
Earl Clem Spencer	•	Decatur	•	Dachau
Julius Spitzberg	•	El Paso	•	Ebensee
Charles Spotted Bear	•	Midland	•	Dachau
Melvin A. Sprott	•	Tarpley	•	Landsberg
Leonard Staciokas	•	Smith	•	Falkenau Zwodau
Marvell T. Staggs	•	Shamrock Brownfield	•	Kaufering
Hugh Steffy	•	El Paso	•	Buchenwald
Cleston Stell	•	Alvarado Fort Worth	•	Buchenwald
Herbert U. Stern	•	Austin	•	Nordhausen
Lawrence R. Stewart	•	Fort Worth	•	Dachau
Worth A. Stewart	•	Uvalde	•	Landsberg
Sam A. Stockbridge	•	Laredo	•	Landsberg
William L. Stough	•	Rice Dallas	•	Landsberg
David Buford Strickel	•	Perrin	•	Landsberg
Jack W. Sturman	•	Tulia	•	Dachau
Burnett L. Sutter	•	Frisco	•	Flossenburg
Nathan Swerdlow	•	Beaumont	•	Gusen Mauthausen
Harry Swofford, Jr.	•	Abilene	•	Dachau

T

Clayton Miles Taylor	•	Arlington	•	Ohrdruf
Delbert Taylor	•	Milam Rockdale	•	Landsberg
Travis R. Taylor	•	Dallas Hopkins County	•	Dachau

Sam Z. Teneyuca	•	San Antonio	•	Landsberg
Reuben George Tepper	•	El Paso	•	Dachau
Ernest Harrison Thomas, Jr.	•	Denton Pickton	•	Dachau
Donald F. Thompson	•	El Paso	•	Landsberg
Wilbur Eugene Thornton	•	Houston Pearland	•	Dachau
Joseph Vincent Tortoise	•	Beaumont	•	Buchenwald
Vernon W. Tott	•	El Paso	•	Ahlem Hannover
William E. Towns	•	Belmont	•	Landsberg
Angel Trejo	•	El Paso	•	Dachau
Arturo Trevino	•	San Antonio Dallas	•	Dachau
Willene D. Turner	•	Abilene	•	Dachau
Earl Tweed	•	Dallas	•	Dinslaken

V

Hugh Brandon Valliant	•	Barstow Pecos	•	Dachau
John Valls	•	Laredo	•	Bergen-Belsen
Ray Vann	•	Garfield Lockhart	•	Landsberg
Demencio Vasquez, Jr.	•	Dolores	•	Landsberg
Luther Victory	•	Caddo Mills Baytown	•	Mauthausen (witness) Stalag 17-B (POW)
Albert F. Voigt	•	Paige Addicks	•	Landsberg
George Volkel	•	Houston	•	Ohrdruf
Emil Vrana	•	Sheldon	•	Landsberg

W

Norris Waddill	•	Ireland Euless	•	Eger Salzwedel
Wilmer J. Wade	•	Nacogdoches Cushing	•	Landsberg
William Francis Walsh	•	Kingsville	•	Dachau
Clinton Walther	•	Warda Livingston	•	Wöbbelin

Eli Warach	•	Houston	•	Mauthausen
Melvin Earl Waters	•	Lancaster Dallas	•	Bergen-Belsen
Raymond Stewart Watson	•	Waco	•	Buchenwald
Harold Bruce Welch	•	Midland	•	Nordhausen
George H. Wessels	•	San Antonio	•	Wesel
Jack Ellis Westbrook	•	Rule	•	Dachau
Tillman Wheat, Jr.	•	Houston	•	Dachau
Shelby Wheelus	•	San Antonio	•	Dachau
James White	•	Port Arthur Nederland	•	Kaufering
Curtis R. Whiteway	•	El Paso	•	Dachau Hadamar
Craig Wilhelm	•	Happy Nazareth	•	Dachau Wewelsburg
S. J. Willburn	•	Magnolia Houston	•	Buchenwald
Robert William	•	Houston	•	Ohrdruf Zwickau
Harrel W. Williams	•	Gober	•	Landsberg
Ardie Robert Williamson	•	Fisher Pollok	•	Magdeburg
Robert R. Williamson	•	Bryan	•	Magdeburg
Ted Willner	•	El Paso	•	Bergen-Belsen
Ben F. Wilson	•	Kingsville	•	Landsberg
James Wilburn Wilson	•	East Texas	•	Gusen Mauthausen
Robert Stanley Winter	•	Houston	•	Dachau
George Wise	•	Dallas	•	Dachau
Leland A. Wittkopp	•	El Paso	•	Bergen-Belsen
Beryl B. Wolfson	•	Houston	•	Dachau
Maurice Wolfson	•	El Paso	•	Salzwedel
William Womack	•	Fort Worth Midland	•	Landsberg
Bishop T. Woodson	•	Conroe	•	Dora-Mittelbau Nordhausen
Charles B. Works	•	Decatur	•	Dachau

Y

Thomas C. Yantis	•	Brownwood	•	Dachau
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Z

Edwin Zabcik	•	Ocker Corsicana	•	Salzwedel
Edward J. Zebrowski	•	Houston	•	Gunskirchen
Fred Ziesk	•	New Braunfels	•	Dachau

THE HOLOCAUST IN PERSPECTIVE

The centuries-old Jewish presence in Eastern Europe, which had served as the cultural heart of the Jewish world, was annihilated by the Nazis. Two-thirds of the continent's Jewish residents—in excess of 6,000,000 people, including 1,500,000 children and most of the world's rabbis—were murdered. Very few of their neighbors had even attempted to come to their rescue. Even though it was known that Germans and their accomplices were targeting Jews for mass murder as early as 1942, the extent and horror of the atrocities were largely unknown to the world until late in the war.

The word *holocaust* originally was an ancient Greek term referring to a type of Jewish Temple ritual in Jerusalem where a sacrificed animal was completely consumed by flames.

Many years after 1945 the word *Holocaust* (with a capital H)

entered the common-English lexicon to denote the near-complete loss of Jewish life and culture in so much of Europe under Nazi rule. Because of the term's positive connotation and biblically ordained purpose in its original context, many survivors and academics are not comfortable using it.

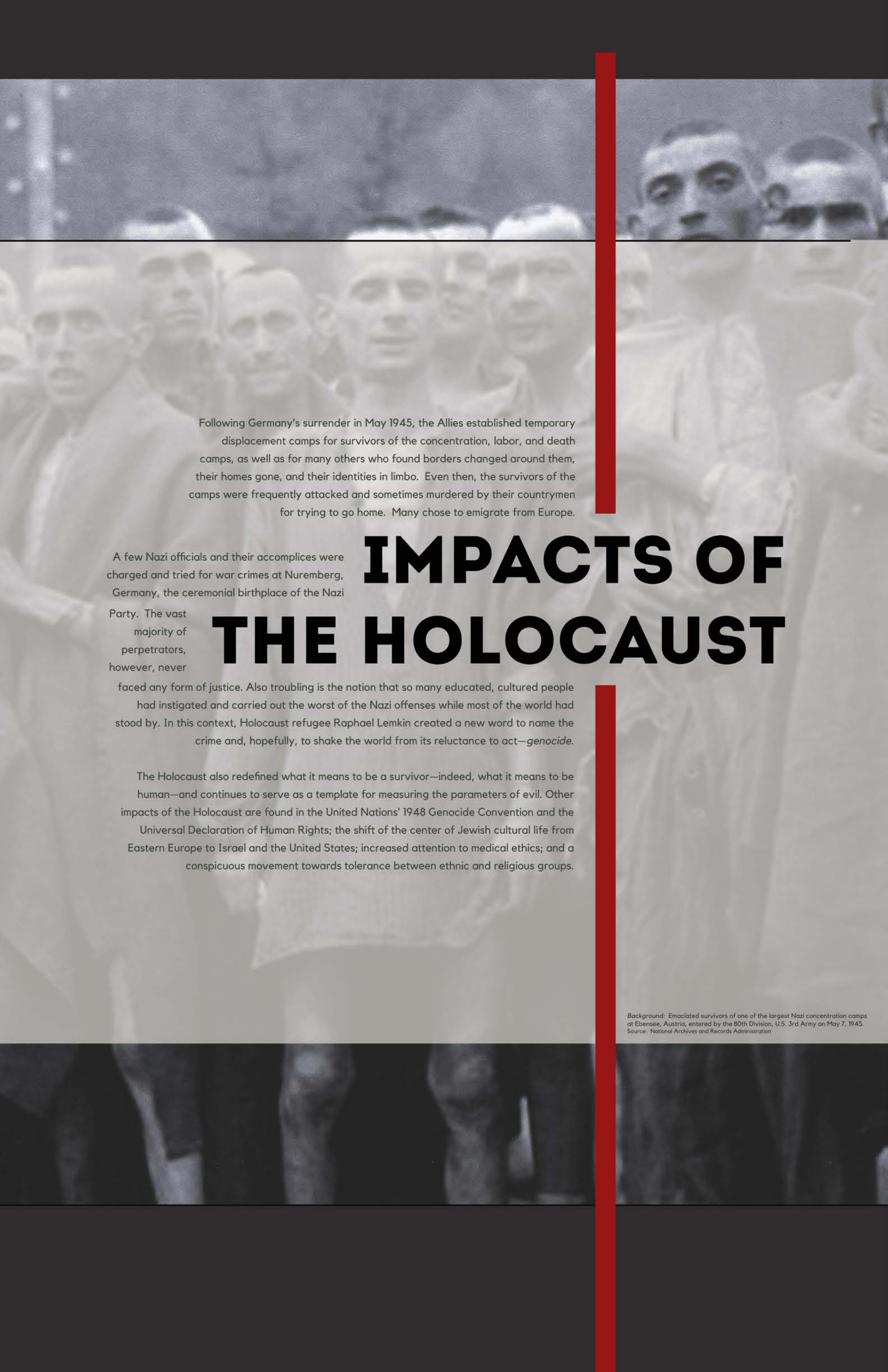
The Hebrew word *Shoah*, meaning catastrophe, has come to refer to the same historical experience, as has the Yiddish word *Churban*, which originally referred to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. In the 1990s Professor Ian Hancock of the University of Texas began to popularize the term *Porajmos*, or "Great Devouring", in reference to the Nazi genocide against the Roma, which claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

Background: Emaciated survivors of one of the largest Nazi concentration camps at Ebensee, Austria, entered by the 80th Division, U.S. 3rd Army on May 7, 1945.
Source: National Archives and Records Administration



They're not going to let this happen again.

An observation by Texas Liberator J. Ted Hartman:
"They meet every year [in Mauthausen] in celebration and to thank the Eleventh Armored. There are almost 20,000 people [who] come to that celebration. We've been there two times. I didn't know—I didn't understand that one. The first meeting we went to, we got there and as far as you can see there were buses from all over Europe. People come who've had a connection. Some of them were the prisoners themselves who wear a scarf made out of material from their original outfit But they all had a connection—from Spain, Italy, all over the place. It's been very touching every time I went. I really got very touched about all of it. You see that, and you think, 'They're not going to let this happen again.'"



Following Germany's surrender in May 1945, the Allies established temporary displacement camps for survivors of the concentration, labor, and death camps, as well as for many others who found borders changed around them, their homes gone, and their identities in limbo. Even then, the survivors of the camps were frequently attacked and sometimes murdered by their countrymen for trying to go home. Many chose to emigrate from Europe.

A few Nazi officials and their accomplices were charged and tried for war crimes at Nuremberg, Germany, the ceremonial birthplace of the Nazi

Party. The vast majority of perpetrators, however, never

faced any form of justice. Also troubling is the notion that so many educated, cultured people had instigated and carried out the worst of the Nazi offenses while most of the world had stood by. In this context, Holocaust refugee Raphael Lemkin created a new word to name the crime and, hopefully, to shake the world from its reluctance to act—*genocide*.

The Holocaust also redefined what it means to be a survivor—indeed, what it means to be human—and continues to serve as a template for measuring the parameters of evil. Other impacts of the Holocaust are found in the United Nations' 1948 Genocide Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the shift of the center of Jewish cultural life from Eastern Europe to Israel and the United States; increased attention to medical ethics; and a conspicuous movement towards tolerance between ethnic and religious groups.

IMPACTS OF THE HOLOCAUST

Background: Emaciated survivors of one of the largest Nazi concentration camps at Ebensee, Austria, entered by the 80th Division, U.S. 3rd Army on May 7, 1945. Source: National Archives and Records Administration

G.I. JOE RETURNS HOME TO TEXAS

The average length of time spent by an American soldier in the Army during the war was about 33 months—16 months of which they spent overseas. Of the approximately 16 million Americans who served in the military during World War II, over 750,000 were from Texas. This group included some of the most famous and highest-ranking names to come out of the war—Admiral Chester W. Nimitz (Fredericksburg), General Dwight D. Eisenhower (born in Denison), Commander Samuel Dealey (of Dallas, the most decorated man in the Navy), and Audie Murphy (from Hunt County, the most decorated American in any branch of the military).

Over 22,000 Texans were killed in action or died of wounds. Thirty-three Texans received the Medal of Honor, including Murphy, Dealey (posthumously), and fourteen members of the 36th Infantry Division, which helped to liberate parts of the Dachau concentration camp network.

It was quite common for World War II veterans to keep their memories of the war private—particularly among the Liberators. The war and memories of the camps were a very profound experience that for some was too difficult to discuss. Only since the 1990s, decades after coming home, have many of the veterans of “The Greatest Generation” begun to share their stories.



Top and Background: Service photos courtesy of Texas Liberator families

The Texas Liberator Project

In 2016 the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission (THGC) approached Texas Tech University with a task to create an educational tool by which students across Texas could be familiarized with the liberation of the concentration camps in German-occupied Europe during World War II. The THGC wanted to see a narrative by which students could come to understand the extremes of savagery and fanaticism, humility and humanity, and the personal perspective of the American soldier.

A key resource the THGC provided was first-hand testimonies collected in 2011–2013 by Baylor University's Institute for Oral History. This project interviewed 19 Texas military veterans who took part in the liberation of Nazi concentration camps, thus liberating tens of thousands of survivors of the Holocaust and other atrocities. Two additional testimonies from Texas veterans were later added.

The centerpiece of the project is a new educational resource, an app titled "The Liberator: Witness to the Holocaust" and an accompanying website that introduces the history of the U.S. liberators of the German concentration camps to high school students across the nation and the public at large. The website and app allow students to virtually and intellectually "enter" the history

and interact directly with maps, video components, blueprints, biographical materials, documents, photographs, and other primary source texts in a unique, first-person, simulated setting.

These tools are designed to connect students to the study and fundamentals of history in a unique and engaging way—offering a virtual interface with a historical event. Inspired by the twenty-one oral history testimonies, the app's narrative is a streamlined chronicle depicting the liberation of Dachau, where the student is exposed to the difficulties faced by liberators described in their own words.

Led by Dr. Aliza Wong, Associate Dean of the Honors College, and faculty mentors Mr. Jiawei Gong, Mr. Christian Pongratz, Dr. Robert Peaslee, and Dr. Randy Reddick, teams of Texas Tech University undergraduate and graduate students took on the gargantuan task of honoring the men and women who sacrificed so much to ensure the liberation, survival, and memory of the Holocaust.



About the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission

Awareness • Education • Inspiration

The mission of the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission (THGC) is to promote awareness and understanding of the Holocaust and other genocides in the world. Since its founding in 2009 by Senate Bill 482, the THGC has dedicated its resources, energy, and expertise to the education of teachers and students to better recognize and acknowledge the consequences of hatred, bigotry, and apathy. This commission was created to reaffirm the commitment of the State of Texas and its citizens to choose right over wrong, good over evil, and through those choices to continue the fight against malevolent forces that would perpetrate genocides and make us question our own humanity. Through education and engagement, the THGC seeks to remind the public of its collective responsibility in not only preventing, but ending once and for all this type of human cruelty.



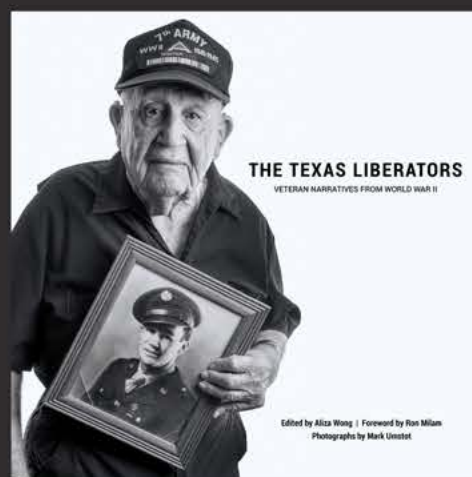
To learn more about the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission, please visit its website at thgc.texas.gov.

The Texas Liberators: Veteran Narratives from World War II

The liberating soldiers—many as young as eighteen—were shocked beyond imagination at what they saw in these camps. In a new book based on the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission-sponsored oral history project, twenty-one Texas Liberators speak compellingly in their own words. They describe their discovery of the camps, their first encounters with detainees, the repression of certain memories in order to survive and live their lives, and the feeling by many that “normal” would never be normal again. This testimony allows all of us to begin to understand the sacrifices made in the name of freedom.

Accompanying many of the narratives are recent portraits of the surviving Liberators by portrait photographer Mark Umstot. The stark, profound images capture a range of expressions and emotions in these elderly gentleman, leading to an even deeper connection to their experiences.

The Texas Liberators: Veteran Narratives from World War II, edited by Aliza S. Wong, will be published by Texas Tech University Press in December 2017.



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