I am Dr. Charles Froug of Dayton, Ohio.

I was invited to speak on behalf of the Holocaust Remembrance.

My area of involvement started in the last week of April of 1945.

and lasted until approximately the first or second day of May of 1945.

At that time I was attached
as a general surgeon with an evacuation hospital in the southern part of Bavaria,

and as we entered a city which was called Rosenheim

We smelt a very unusual odor throughout the city. And as we asked the people of the city what the odor was. Most of them had the same answer, that it was a factory about six or seven kilometers away and they were making fertilizers for the farm area around that.
But, being a physician,

the odor was unmistakable.

And I got permission from my commanding officer
to take a jeep. And with three
other enlisted men we drove

the eight kilometers. And there we found a
large area which was completely surrounded

by barbed wire. And the closer we
got the more intense the odor became.

The gates were open and as we drove
in we saw hundreds of emaciated
people running around with what appeared to be striped pajamas. We later found out that these were not pajamas, but these were prison clothes.

We found out that this was the famous infamous Dachau. Not only were there Jewish prisoners but there was also many political prisoners. Many of the ministers of the Lutheran faith that had been against Hitler had been sent there. Some Catholic priests who had spoken against the Nazis
had been sent there. But the greater majority

26
00:03:52,880 --> 00:03:53,600
were Jews.

27
00:03:56,160 --> 00:03:57,360
Of the people that we saw,

28
00:03:59,920 --> 00:04:06,480
not one weighed over 70 pounds.
They were gaunt, emaciated,

29
00:04:07,840 --> 00:04:14,640
crying, and in their tears they
kept asking, "who are you?"

30
00:04:17,840 --> 00:04:23,760
And since I spoke some Yiddish, which was
the language of most of the prisoners there,

31
00:04:25,360 --> 00:04:28,560
I explained to them that I was a member of the
hospital unit and that we had come
to save them and try to help them.

And many of them got on their hands, and knees,
and kissed my hand, kissed my legs. And they cried
constantly, because the only outlook
that they had of their entire life

was being burned in the furnaces of the
crematoria, which was in the back of this camp.

As my other soldiers and myself
walked through this camp,
we saw many, many dead bodies lying like
cord wood piled one on top of the other.
Along a fence there must have been five six seven hundred lying there.

And the closer we got to the crematorium the greater the smell, and that was the unmistakable smell of burnt flesh. This is one odor that one never forgets, particularly when you’re working in an emergency room of the hospital and they bring the burn patients in. And you never forget that smell. But, if you can imagine,

two or three hundred bodies that had
just been burned in the last week or so,

what a terrifying odor that had to be
for those people who came in there.

As we approached the crematorium there were hooks

on a rail. and there were eight or ten bodies
still on the hooks. And this is what they did

when the patient would die. They would take
that individual and hang him on the hook.

And someone would come by, and shear off all the
hair, and beat him across the mouth with a club,

knock out their teeth, so that they
could find gold in those teeth.

50
00:06:46,720 --> 00:06:53,680
We then walked to the crematorium. There were 15 ovens of which some were still

51
00:06:54,720 --> 00:07:01,840
burning. The flames were still there. Bones were still being charred, and the odor was just

52
00:07:02,560 --> 00:07:04,640
horrible, it was impossible to tolerate.

53
00:07:06,720 --> 00:07:12,560
Then we realized that none of this information had ever been gotten out.

54
00:07:15,760 --> 00:07:19,440
The only reason that I even made the attempt to go there was the fact that

55
00:07:19,440 --> 00:07:25,280
I smelt this unusual odor, and I knew it was
burning flesh, and I had to see what it was.

After seeing all of this,

I returned to the city of Rosenheim with my enlisted men.

And this happened to have been on a Thursday. The very, very next day our commanding officer sent some of our men there with food.

And I went back with the other Jewish members of our hospital unit. There were 18 Jewish doctors.

We went back there and we said a prayer for the dead, the Kaddish, for those who had died.
We could not move or bury the bodies, because at Friday night the Sabbath starts at about, at that particular time it started about six o'clock.

And we could not bury the bodies that night, or on the Shabbat, which was Saturday. And on Sunday morning, we marched eight thousand people from the city of Rosenheim about eight kilometers.

We gave them trenching tools.

We made them dig a large, single grave, about two hundred foot by fifty foot.
by ten foot. And we made the people carry these bodies and lay them in this trench.

Finally, we covered them with earth.

One of my enlisted men had made a Jewish star, a six-pointed star, to put over the graves. There was no way of knowing who was Jewish, who was Catholic or who was Lutheran, but we thought that having a Jewish star there, would be acceptable to all.

When we got back to the town,
our commanding officer insisted that the mayor
be imprisoned. One of our military
government, military police
arrested him. And in examining him,
took his shirt off. And under his left
armpit was the SS mark, which was tattooed
with his number. He had been an SS trooper
and he had escaped from his unit, went
back to his home, and became the mayor.
But when we had asked him before
what he had known concerning this, He kept on saying, "Ich war kein Nazi," "I was never a Nazi,"

which was untrue, because we found that he had the SS mark on his arms.

I was able to converse with one young 16 or 17 year old boy in Yiddish. And he explained that the officers and the enlisted men had escaped two days before, because they knew that the Americans were coming. The guards couldn't get out of there because they had no weapons. And these emaciated, starved people killed most of these guards just by tearing them apart by their hands and their teeth.
We saw a number of these guards whose faces were mutilated by the inmates of this prison.

The only information we ever got was from the magazine called Yank and nothing was printed in that, that did not have the administration's approval. So, we knew nothing that was going on. We knew nothing about Auschwitz. We knew nothing about Majdanek. We knew nothing about um uh Treblinka. [FRYDMAN] You knew, you didn't even know, that Jews had been rounded up? [FROUG] And

No, no we had we had no knowledge of this, because uh even though our government knew it,
uh Justice Frankfurter and Cardoza went to President Roosevelt, and gave them all the information that they had which had been gotten from secondary sources. Uh,

Mr. Morgenthau, who was our Secretary of War at that particular time, had all this information and gave it to the President, but none of this information was given to the media just like the Americans did not know until after we captured all of these places. Then my letters went home.

Pictures went home. People still didn't want to believe me. [FRYDMAN] Did you get to speak to any
of the inmates at Dachau other than the young man that you first spoke about, and asked them questions about what occurred there? [FROUG] I spoke to a few of the others, but most of them were so gaunt, and so starved that they couldn't stop crying. They were so grateful to be, have the knowledge that they were going to be saved, and they had the life that they couldn't hardly talk.

We asked them where the records were located and they didn't know.

We found the commandant's office and
we searched that. And he must have

taken them or burnt them before he left. We
brought food, as I said, the very next day

and they gorged themselves on the food. Everyone
who gorged themselves got very very, very,

very ill, because their body could not handle
the food that we gave them. When the Red Cross

came uh they had some nutritionists with them
and they were able to handle the dietary portion

uh for these people. But one aside, the last
day we were there which was the fifth day,
we went back to the concern, where they were located, and we saw one man who had a scissors,

and he was cutting out a pair of pants out of a blanket.

And I asked him in Yiddish what had been his trade.

And he answered me,

"ikh bin geven a shneyder," "I was a tailor."

So even at that time of his life he was thinking about making a new life for himself.

And tried to make himself a pair of trousers,
because he did not want to wear the garb

116
00:15:13,520 --> 00:15:19,200
of the prison. [FRYDMAN] Did any of them, did
you have any idea how long a person was there

117
00:15:19,760 --> 00:15:25,200
that it took until they met that ultimate
death? [FROUG] The few that were able to

118
00:15:25,200 --> 00:15:30,320
give us any answers at all, none of them had
been there longer than five or six months.

119
00:15:31,760 --> 00:15:36,400
And the whole story, which came out
later on, was that these people.

120
00:15:38,880 --> 00:15:44,080
This particular group of people uh they
didn't work because these were mostly

121
00:15:44,080 --> 00:15:50,800
political prisoners, beside the Jewish
prisoners. And uh they just walked.

It was all farmland around it, but they didn't
get anything to eat. The usual meal was a thin

potato soup at breakfast with a crust of bread and
the very same thing at supper. They had no lunch.

They had no meat. They hadn't seen
meat in the camp for months. And in the
inmates buildings there were a row on row
on row of just wooden bunks four high,

And nothing but straw, had no
sheets no pillow cases, no blankets.
And when one died, he was dragged out by either the prisoners themselves or the kapos, the prisoners that the Germans had appointed as their guards. They would put them on a wheelbarrow, and take them over to this area that I mentioned before, and just lay them out like cord wood. And the only thing they would do is bring in another armful of hay, and put it back where the person had been, and then put another prisoner in there.

They had pot-bellied stoves was the only
heating that they had for the entire room, and each room held two hundred people.

You, you just can't forget. [FRYDMAN] Do you think as many starved, probably many starved, or died of disease? [FROUG] Most, most of them died of starvation and disease, yes.

The starvation was primarily the main cause of death, and I would imagine that typhus would have been a second cause of death with a terrible diarrhea and vomiting that most of them had.

This is how they got as emaciated as they did and uh... [FRYDMAN] And the ovens were used
primarily for the Jewish prisoners? Do you think?

[FROUG] Well, the ovens were used for everyone.

But, the ratio was at least 30 or 40 to one of Jewish inmates against the Christian inmates,

the... [FRYDMAN] Were there men, women, and children? [FROUG] There were no, no women there that we saw. There were men, older men, and young boys, 15, 16, and 17. They were able to uh,

accept the starvation better than the older people who died much easier.

But, if you've ever seen any of the pictures at the Yad Vashem,
which is the Building of Remembrance in Jerusalem, uh you'll just never forget this is exactly...

uh Never saw a person there that weighed over 70 pounds. [FRYDMAN] What what was the feelings of the other young soldiers, as you were young soldiers then. [FROUG] They were all terribly, terribly uh upset, uh because they had never seen anything like this before. They had never known of things going on like this. They had never known that there was a genocide going on. We tried to explain some of it to them that this
was part of Hitler's plan of having Juden Rhine cleansed of Jews for all of Germany, and all of occupied Europe that they had captured. But we did not know that the Battle of Warsaw were 15 or 1800 Jewish people men women and children fought against the Germans. [FRYDMAN] These images have stayed with you all these years quite vividly. [FROUG] They dim a little bit but everytime that something comes up on television like this last nine-hour documentary show it brings back all of it
as vividly as if I were there today. I can smell that same odor that I smelt over 42 years ago. [OUTRO SONG] You must not say that you now walk the final way because the darkened heavens hide the blue of day. The time we've longed for will at last run here, and our steps as drums will sound that we are here. From land all green with palms to lands all white with snow. We now arrive with all our pain and all our woe where our blood sprayed out and came to touch the land. There our courage and our faith will rise and stand
you.