

1

00:00:01,520 --> 00:00:16,920

[Intro Music]

2

00:00:32,880 --> 00:00:36,640

I am Dr. Charles Froug of Dayton, Ohio.

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00:00:38,320 --> 00:00:47,680

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

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00:00:50,080 --> 00:01:01,280

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

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00:01:02,960 --> 00:01:08,720

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

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00:01:10,960 --> 00:01:12,720

At that time I was attached

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00:01:14,080 --> 00:01:20,320

as a general surgeon with an evacuation  
hospital in the southern part of Bavaria,

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00:01:22,720 --> 00:01:29,120

and as we entered a city  
which was called Rosenheim

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00:01:32,320 --> 00:01:34,560

We smelt a very unusual odor

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00:01:36,640 --> 00:01:43,760

throughout the city. And as we asked  
the people of the city what the odor

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00:01:43,760 --> 00:01:52,000

was. Most of them had the same answer, that it  
was a factory about six or seven kilometers away

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00:01:53,120 --> 00:01:59,600

and they were making fertilizers  
for the farm area around that.

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00:02:01,920 --> 00:02:04,400

But, being a physician,

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00:02:07,360 --> 00:02:09,040

the odor was unmistakable.

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00:02:12,240 --> 00:02:16,240

And I got permission from my commanding officer

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00:02:18,400 --> 00:02:24,480

to take a jeep. And with three  
other enlisted men we drove

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00:02:25,840 --> 00:02:34,400

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

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00:02:35,200 --> 00:02:42,480

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

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00:02:46,080 --> 00:02:56,880

The gates were open and as we drove  
in we saw hundreds of emaciated

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00:02:58,320 --> 00:03:06,160

people running around with what appeared  
to be striped pajamas. We later found out

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00:03:08,320 --> 00:03:11,360

that these were not pajamas.  
but these were prison clothes.

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00:03:13,680 --> 00:03:18,080

We found out that this was  
the famous infamous Dachau.

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00:03:21,120 --> 00:03:28,400

Not only were there Jewish prisoners but  
there was also many political prisoners.

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00:03:30,400 --> 00:03:42,320

Many of the ministers of the Lutheran faith that  
had been against Hitler had been sent there. Some

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00:03:42,320 --> 00:03:50,080

Catholic priests who had spoken against the Nazis

had been sent there. But the greater majority

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00:03:52,880 --> 00:03:53,600

were Jews.

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00:03:56,160 --> 00:03:57,360

Of the people that we saw,

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00:03:59,920 --> 00:04:06,480

not one weighed over 70 pounds.

They were gaunt, emaciated,

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00:04:07,840 --> 00:04:14,640

crying, and in their tears they

kept asking, "who are you?"

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00:04:17,840 --> 00:04:23,760

And since I spoke some Yiddish, which was  
the language of most of the prisoners there,

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00:04:25,360 --> 00:04:28,560

I explained to them that I was a member of the

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00:04:28,560 --> 00:04:34,320

hospital unit and that we had come  
to save them and try to help them.

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00:04:36,560 --> 00:04:45,360

And many of them got on their hands, and knees,  
and kissed my hand, kissed my legs. And they cried

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00:04:46,000 --> 00:04:52,080

constantly, because the only outlook  
that they had of their entire life

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00:04:54,720 --> 00:05:02,240

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

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00:05:04,880 --> 00:05:12,080

As my other soldiers and myself  
walked through this camp,

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00:05:14,480 --> 00:05:21,120

we saw many, many dead bodies lying like  
cord wood piled one on top of the other.

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00:05:22,160 --> 00:05:29,280

Along a fence there must have been  
five six seven hundred lying there.

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00:05:30,000 --> 00:05:34,000

And the closer we got to the  
crematorium the greater the smell,

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00:05:35,120 --> 00:05:41,680

and that was the unmistakable smell of burnt  
flesh. This is one odor that one never forgets,

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00:05:42,960 --> 00:05:46,400

particularly when you're working in  
an emergency room of the hospital

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00:05:46,400 --> 00:05:52,720

and they bring the burn patients in. And you  
never forget that smell. But, if you can imagine,

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00:05:55,120 --> 00:05:58,720

two or three hundred bodies that had

just been burned in the last week or so,

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00:05:59,920 --> 00:06:06,240

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

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00:06:06,240 --> 00:06:11,760

As we approached the crematorium there were hooks

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00:06:14,240 --> 00:06:21,920

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

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00:06:21,920 --> 00:06:27,360

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

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00:06:28,160 --> 00:06:36,320

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

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00:06:37,680 --> 00:06:42,320

knock out their teeth, so that they

could find gold in those teeth.

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00:06:46,720 --> 00:06:53,680

We then walked to the crematorium. There were 15 ovens of which some were still

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00:06:54,720 --> 00:07:01,840

burning. The flames were still there. Bones were still being charred, and the odor was just

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00:07:02,560 --> 00:07:04,640

horrible, it was impossible to tolerate.

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00:07:06,720 --> 00:07:12,560

Then we realized that none of this information had ever been gotten out.

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00:07:15,760 --> 00:07:19,440

The only reason that I even made the attempt to go there was the fact that

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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.

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00:07:27,760 --> 00:07:29,840

After seeing all of this,

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00:07:32,160 --> 00:07:36,480

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

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00:07:39,360 --> 00:07:48,160

And this happened to have been on a Thursday. The  
very, very next day our commanding officer sent

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00:07:50,400 --> 00:07:52,880

some of our men there with food.

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00:07:54,800 --> 00:08:02,000

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

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00:08:04,480 --> 00:08:11,840

We went back there and we said a prayer for  
the dead, the Kaddish, for those who had died.

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00:08:15,840 --> 00:08:18,800

We could not move or bury the bodies, because

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00:08:20,800 --> 00:08:26,160

at Friday night the Sabbath starts at about, at that particular time it started about six o'clock.

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00:08:28,240 --> 00:08:35,760

And we could not bury the bodies that night, or on the Shabbat, which was Saturday. And on Sunday

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00:08:35,760 --> 00:08:44,240

morning, we marched eight thousand people from the city of Rosenheim about eight kilometers.

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00:08:46,560 --> 00:08:48,880

We gave them trenching tools.

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00:08:51,040 --> 00:08:59,440

We made them dig a large, single grave, about two hundred foot by fifty foot

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00:08:59,440 --> 00:09:08,080

by ten foot. And we made the people carry these bodies and lay them in this trench.

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00:09:12,560 --> 00:09:15,600

Finally, we covered them with earth.

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00:09:17,760 --> 00:09:23,680

One of my enlisted men had made a Jewish star, a six-pointed star,

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00:09:24,560 --> 00:09:30,960

to put over the graves. There was no way of knowing who was Jewish, who was Catholic

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00:09:30,960 --> 00:09:38,320

or who was Lutheran, but we thought that having a Jewish star there, would be acceptable to all.

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00:09:41,600 --> 00:09:43,120

When we got back to the town,

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00:09:47,360 --> 00:09:49,840

our commanding officer insisted that the mayor

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00:09:52,640 --> 00:09:56,480

be imprisoned. One of our military  
government, military police

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00:09:57,040 --> 00:10:05,040

arrested him. And in examining him,  
took his shirt off. And under his left

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00:10:05,760 --> 00:10:15,760

armpit was the SS mark, which was tattooed  
with his number. He had been an SS trooper

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00:10:17,200 --> 00:10:24,000

and he had escaped from his unit, went  
back to his home, and became the mayor.

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00:10:26,080 --> 00:10:27,760

But when we had asked him before

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00:10:30,080 --> 00:10:39,440

what he had known concerning this, He kept on saying, "Ich war kein Nazi," "I was never a Nazi,"

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00:10:42,080 --> 00:10:46,240

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

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00:10:48,080 --> 00:10:56,400

I was able to converse with one young 16 or 17 year old boy in Yiddish. And he explained that

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00:10:56,400 --> 00:11:03,440

the officers and the enlisted men had escaped two days before, because they knew that the Americans

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00:11:03,440 --> 00:11:13,840

were coming. The guards couldn't get out of there because they had no weapons. And these emaciated,

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00:11:15,040 --> 00:11:23,360

starved people killed most of these guards just by tearing them apart by their hands and their teeth.

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00:11:25,040 --> 00:11:32,320

We saw a number of these guards whose faces were mutilated by the inmates of this prison.

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00:11:34,320 --> 00:11:42,160

The only information we ever got was from the magazine called Yank and nothing was printed in

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00:11:42,160 --> 00:11:47,680

that, that did not have the administration's approval. So, we knew nothing that was going

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00:11:47,680 --> 00:11:54,960

on. We knew nothing about Auschwitz. We knew nothing about Majdanek. We knew nothing about um

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00:11:54,960 --> 00:12:01,280

uh Treblinka. [FRYDMAN] You knew, you didn't even know, that Jews had been rounded up? [FROUG] And

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00:12:01,280 --> 00:12:06,480

No, no we had we had no knowledge of this, because uh even though our government knew it,

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00:12:07,920 --> 00:12:15,840

uh Justice Frankfurter and Cardoza went  
to President Roosevelt, and gave them all

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00:12:15,840 --> 00:12:23,840

the information that they had which had  
been gotten from secondary sources. Uh,

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00:12:25,280 --> 00:12:31,600

Mr. Morgenthau, who was our Secretary of War at  
that particular time, had all this information

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00:12:32,240 --> 00:12:39,440

and gave it to the President, but none of this  
information was given to the media just like the

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00:12:39,440 --> 00:12:45,440

Americans did not know until after we captured  
all of these places. Then my letters went home.

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00:12:46,240 --> 00:12:52,240

Pictures went home. People still didn't want to  
believe me. [FRYDMAN] Did you get to speak to any

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00:12:52,240 --> 00:12:58,480

of the inmates at Dachau other than the young man that you first spoke about, and asked them

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00:12:59,120 --> 00:13:05,840

questions about what occurred there? [FROUG] I spoke to a few of the others, but most of them

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00:13:07,440 --> 00:13:17,360

were so gaunt, and so starved that they couldn't stop crying. They were so grateful to be, have the

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00:13:17,360 --> 00:13:23,120

knowledge that they were going to be saved, and they had the life that they couldn't hardly talk.

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00:13:24,640 --> 00:13:28,160

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

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00:13:29,440 --> 00:13:35,040

We found the commandant's office and

we searched that. And he must have

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00:13:35,040 --> 00:13:41,920

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

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00:13:46,560 --> 00:13:53,840

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

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00:13:53,840 --> 00:14:03,600

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

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00:14:03,600 --> 00:14:12,000

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

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00:14:12,640 --> 00:14:22,000

uh for these people. But one aside, the last day we were there which was the fifth day,

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00:14:23,280 --> 00:14:34,400

we went back to the concern, where they were located, and we saw one man who had a scissors,

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00:14:36,720 --> 00:14:40,320

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

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00:14:42,400 --> 00:14:46,080

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

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00:14:48,720 --> 00:14:49,760

And he answered me,

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00:14:49,760 --> 00:14:54,320

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

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00:14:56,320 --> 00:15:05,120

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

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00:15:06,240 --> 00:15:12,880

And tried to make himself a pair of trousers,

because he did not want to wear the garb

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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

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00:15:19,760 --> 00:15:25,200

that it took until they met that ultimate death? [FROUG] The few that were able to

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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.

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00:15:31,760 --> 00:15:36,400

And the whole story, which came out later on, was that these people.

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00:15:38,880 --> 00:15:44,080

This particular group of people uh they didn't work because these were mostly

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00:15:44,080 --> 00:15:50,800

political prisoners, beside the jewish  
prisoners. And uh they just walked.

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00:15:52,080 --> 00:16:00,240

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

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00:16:00,240 --> 00:16:09,760

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

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00:16:10,720 --> 00:16:18,160

They had no meat. They hadn't seen  
meat in the camp for months. And in the

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00:16:18,160 --> 00:16:30,960

inmates buildings there were a row on row  
on row of just wooden bunks four high,

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00:16:33,760 --> 00:16:41,120

And nothing but straw, had no  
sheets no pillow cases, no blankets.

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00:16:44,720 --> 00:16:53,760

And when one died, he was dragged out by either the prisoners themselves or the kapos, the

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00:16:55,920 --> 00:17:03,840

prisoners that the germans had appointed as their guards. They would put them on a

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00:17:04,880 --> 00:17:10,400

wheelbarrow, and take them over to this area that I mentioned before, and just lay them

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00:17:10,400 --> 00:17:17,840

out like cord wood. And the only thing they would do is bring in another armful of hay,

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00:17:18,880 --> 00:17:24,000

and put it back where the person had been, and then put another prisoner in there.

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00:17:27,120 --> 00:17:30,880

They had pot-bellied stoves was the only

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00:17:30,880 --> 00:17:36,880

heating that they had for the entire room,  
and each room held two hundred people.

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00:17:41,360 --> 00:17:48,080

You, you just can't forget. [FRYDMAN] Do you  
think as many starved, probably many starved,

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00:17:48,080 --> 00:17:54,640

or died of disease? [FROUG] Most, most of  
them died of of starvation and disease, yes.

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00:17:57,360 --> 00:18:04,640

The starvation was primarily the main cause of  
death, and I would imagine that typhus would have

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00:18:04,640 --> 00:18:10,240

been a second cause of death with a terrible  
diarrhea and vomiting that most of them had.

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00:18:10,240 --> 00:18:16,320

This is how they got as emaciated as they did  
and uh... [FRYDMAN] And the ovens were used

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00:18:16,320 --> 00:18:21,440

primarily for the Jewish prisoners? Do you think?

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

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00:18:23,520 --> 00:18:32,960

But, the ratio was at least 30 or 40 to one of

Jewish inmates against the Christian inmates,

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00:18:35,120 --> 00:18:42,000

the... [FRYDMAN] Were there men, women, and

children? [FROUG] There were no, no women there

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00:18:42,000 --> 00:18:52,000

that we saw. There were men, older men, and

young boys, 15, 16, and 17. They were able to uh,

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00:18:53,840 --> 00:18:57,600

accept the starvation better than the

older people who died much easier.

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00:19:00,320 --> 00:19:06,400

But, if you've ever seen any of

the pictures at the Yad Vashem,

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00:19:08,080 --> 00:19:18,080

which is the Building of Remembrance in Jerusalem,  
uh you'll just never forget this is exactly...

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00:19:18,800 --> 00:19:27,200

uh Never saw a person there that weighed over  
70 pounds. [FRYDMAN] What what was the feelings

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00:19:27,200 --> 00:19:32,960

of the other young soldiers, as you were young  
soldiers then. [FROUG] They were all terribly,

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00:19:32,960 --> 00:19:42,480

terribly uh upset, uh because they had never seen  
anything like this before. They had never known

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00:19:43,040 --> 00:19:52,880

of things going on like this. They had never  
known that there was a genocide going on. We

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00:19:54,320 --> 00:20:00,800

we tried to explain some of it to them that this

was part of hitler's plan of having Juden Rhine

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00:20:03,360 --> 00:20:11,600

cleansed of Jews for all of Germany, and all of occupied Europe that they had captured. But we

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00:20:11,600 --> 00:20:23,040

did not know that the Battle of Warsaw were 15 or 1800 jewish people men women and children fought

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00:20:23,040 --> 00:20:28,640

against the Germans. [FRYDMAN] These images have stayed with you all these years quite vividly.

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00:20:29,960 --> 00:20:36,560

[FROUG] They dim a little bit but everytime that something comes up on television

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00:20:37,680 --> 00:20:44,480

like this last nine-hour documentary show it brings back all of it

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00:20:45,280 --> 00:20:50,720

as vividly as if i were there today. I  
can smell that same odor that I smelt

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00:20:52,800 --> 00:21:05,760

over 42 years ago. [OUTRO SONG] You must  
not say that you now walk the final way

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00:21:07,120 --> 00:21:15,520

because the darkened heavens hide the blue of day.  
The time we've longed for will at last run here,

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00:21:16,880 --> 00:21:23,600

and our steps as drums will sound that we  
are here. From land all green with palms to

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00:21:23,600 --> 00:21:32,240

lands all white with snow. We now arrive with  
all our pain and all our woe where our blood

161

00:21:32,240 --> 00:21:43,840

sprayed out and came to touch the land. There  
our courage and our faith will rise and stand

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00:21:46,320 --> 00:21:46,400

you.