

LIBERATION OF DACHAU CONCENTRATION CAMP

By: George Janiszewski

April 18, 2005

On Sunday, April 29, 1945, the United States army liberated Dachau concentration camp. The first American soldier who entered the gate was Polish-American with a Polish flag in his hand. Also in that group of American soldiers was a Greek-American whom I met in San Carlos 30 years later.

I am one of those that was liberated.

In that camp were men from every European country. Most of them were Polish Roman Catholics. By the end of 1941, there were approximately 14 thousand Polish men arrested, 1700 of which were Polish Roman Catholic priests.

I arrived in Dachau in May of 1940 and my prisoner number was 11606. At this time, Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camps did not yet exist. On the day of liberation the number of prisoners at Dachau was 160 thousand and out of that total number only 32 thousand prisoners remained alive. One-third of these prisoners were sick with typhus and dysentery, and 2 thousand corpses lay in the crematorium for disposal.

During the 5 years I was there, 42 thousand Polish men arrived in that camp. 10 thousand died from hard labor, disease, malnutrition and medical experiments performed on prisoners. Of that number 1100 were Polish Roman Catholic priests.

Altogether, 32 thousand men died at Dachau from 22 European countries ranging in age from 14 years to 80 years old.

The camp had 30 barracks, each was numbered. In barrack number 30 alone, from December 1944 through April 1945 (a period of 5 months), the following number of men died: 168 Polish, 189 French, 46 Belgians, 110 Russians, 262 Italians, 56 Hollanders, 85 Hungarians, 320 Jews, 2 Rumanians, 25 Czechoslovakians, 30 Spaniards, 4 Lithuanians, 16 Estonians, 9 Greeks, 6 Luxemburg, 9 Norwegians, 197 Germans, and 82 Yugoslavians, for a total number of 1616.

In the last few days before liberation, no S.S. Guards entered the camp. We were practically governing ourselves. After the liberation, no one was allowed to leave the camp for another 4 weeks for fear of spreading typhus and dysentery. The first healthy prisoners who left the camp were French, Hollanders and Belgians; after that, other Europeans were repatriated to their countries. The sick were still kept in the camp for a while before they were repatriated.

If the Americans came one day later, we would all be dead because there was an order given by the Germans to annihilate *all* the inmates of the camp by that evening, but the Americans came at 5:30 P.M. and saved us.

Germany: Dachau Concentration Camp Records, 1945

Name:	Georg Janiszewski
Birth Place:	Litzmannstadt
Birth Date:	29 May 1922
Arrival Date:	26 May 1940
Prisoner Number:	11606
Nationality:	Polish
Arrival Notes:	train 26 May 1940
Disposition Notes:	liberated Italian Dachau
Description:	prisoner Polish
Prior Residence:	Litzmannstadt
Street Address:	Mita Nr. 39
Page:	2405 / Bg.
Original Notes (desc. / arr. / dis.):	Sch. Po. / Zug.: 26 May 1940 / befr. i. Dachau



