WILLIAM MCWORKMAN: Perhaps I should start by saying that I was in the 12th armored division--one of several armored divisions in the 3rd and 7th Army who drove south toward Austria. Our original mission as Munich, but and OSS agent who we had sent forward earlier in the week, we found from the Munich burgermeister or mayor that they were going to give up the city without a fight, so our mission was changed so we headed more to the south and the east on the west side of Amersee down through--our objective was, initial objective was Weilheim, Weilheim and from Weilheim we were to go down through Oberau, thence into Innsbruck and finally down to Brenner Pass where we were to hopefully finish the war at that point. Things were very confused both on the German side and in the American and British side. We changed missions quite often. We had usually three columns of armor moving down south parallel to each other distanced by several miles. And I was with the division artillery commander, Col Geldart, as we moved south from Augsburg toward Lech and the town of Landsberg. We didn't know that the camps were there as we came down through there, but we finally crossed the Lech river and most of the camps were from Landsberg strung up through the village of Kaufering a few kilometers to the north. And we entered camp no. 4 I found out later the number of that, and with I was with a group of about of ten people, I think, from the division artillery although other members of the division were there. And I had some impressions of our movement into that area. The first one was utter horror at what we saw. There must have been piled of 4- 600 bodies piled in one part of the camp as we entered. Another pile was burning. Some of the low shacks in which the poor prisoners lived, supposedly living, had the door locked with the prisoners inside and set fire and these were just a mass of charred bodies, still burning, the stench was awful. I think one of the big impressions that I first had as we came in was that the blueness of their skin. They had been so starved and so emaciated that the skin hue was a

definite blue and looked like a chicken after it had been picked and ready to boil. Some of the bodies were burning back in other parts of the camp. We saw various buildings in various stages of disrepair and burning. We saw what appeared to be German guards in the area, and, of course, these were being surrounded by allied troops as they come into the camp. In effect, it was not a capture of the camp as it was an over running of the camp. We had no resistance as we came up there. One of the things that I remember particularly was an S, what later turned out to be an SS guard who had changed his uniform from his SS suit into civilian clothes who was standing knee deep in bodies out there with allied troops more or less surrounding him. I found out later from the Holocaust people that they had identified this guard who the next day had been killed by a prisoner who had just had enough I think, and took a board and hit him over the head and killed him. We weren't there for that event, but I think it happened quite frequently throughout the camp. Also, you must remember that the as these camps were overrun in the Landsberg/Kaufering area, many of the prisoners either escaped or were released through open gates and were wandering down the road and some of the most pitiful sights we saw were these inmates in all stages of undress with striped pajamas on or with with very little clothes on at all, wandering down the road in a very dazed and glazed-eye condition. They begged for food, they weren't sure who we They were told that we were American troops and seemed overjoyed. Back to the camp for a moment, we were particularly impressed with the joy with which they greeted the American troops. One of the people in my group was a Jewish master sergeant, or operations sergeant, Dick Mansen, who very fortunately had received a box of matzoth bread, or matzoth crackers that day or in the previous day's mail. he had those with him and he went aside to a group who was standing there and distributed these matzoth bread or matzoth crackers to the Jewish prisoners there and to a man they were crying because it was the first matzoth bread that

they had seen in five years or however long they had been in the camp. It was a very, very emotional and moving thing. The horror of it hit us even afterwards as much as it did as we saw them there. But the the prisoners were well-behaved, one of the key problems that we had as we entered this camp when others did who they entered their camp, was the disease problem. We knew that people under those conditions must have been suffering from typhus as well as many many other diseases, and we were told to be very careful and not get too close to them or touch them even though our natural human inclination was to see what we could do to make them comfortable. In some cases they had been given blankets and K rations and C rations from our supplies to cover up those who were still eh uncovered so to speak. It wa a cold wet day, as I recall, and even with our uniforms and jackets we were uncomfortable, and you can imagine what the poor prisoners suffered in that same vein. I talked to a friend of mine from the 493rd field artillery battalion who was in one of the efforts moving south parallel to us, Pete Bramble, and he mentioned the fact that his wire truck pulled up to a camp which had evidently not been entered at all, and the first thing they saw were barbed wire fences so they hit their truck, took their carbines and machine guns, moved forward in there and found out what the situation was. Prisoners came up and kissed their trousers and one of the most memorable recollections that either Pete or one of those wire crews was that someone stood at the edge of the camp and saluted them which really was an emotional thing for these American soldiers who had never seen this kind of mistreatment of people in their lives. General Allan, the division commander of the 12th entered the camp while I was there,and was as shocked as we were to see the realism of what these camps were. And later in the day, I understand that he ordered that all male villagers from the nearby village, and I can't tell you which village it was because there were several around , but he had them walk through the camp. look at all of the things, from the ovens

to the burning huts in the ground to the stacks of bodies, to the living people and he had them bury the bodies the next day that evening in the next day with their bare hands, which they did. I don't recall that they took the women of the village through the camp, and I can understand why. That evening, we were told, the burgermeister or the mayor of the little village shot him self. Most of the village observers who went through claimed that they didn't even know that the camp was there. We found that difficult to believe because in many cases you could see the wire fences from the village. But we ran into a lot of this denial as we called it as we went through other camps and through that part of Germany. All kinds of different incidents occurred. Many people were there at the camp before I arrived, so mine is a very poignant observation of the camp, but I didn't, I wasn't the first one in, so I don't know what actually happened as the first troops arrived. Sandy: ,,and also of your fellow service men.

WILLIAM MCWORKMAN: That is one thing that I did forget. You know, I eh, I'll start with that maybe.

Sandy: Yeah, that's fine.

WILLIAM MCWORKMAN: OK. Ok.

Sandy: Just wait, just a sec.

WILLIAM MCWORKMAN: One of the things that was most noticeable was the color and countenance and appearance of the prisoners themselves. I do remember that most of them

appeared to me to have almost blue skin, very little circulation, starvation, riding only on bones and no flesh and the stench was awful, the appearance of their eyes was glazed. They couldn't believe what they were seeing, and eh their voices were weak. We did talk to several of them. They were overjoyed, tears were running most of their faces, but these men were in not a normal condition, they were far worse. I would have guessed that the majority of them ranged in weight from maybe 70 pounds up to 80 or 90 at the most. Very few people did we see who weren't pure skeleton with skins stretched over the top. Another very impressive thing about the environment or the ambiance of that meeting was the careful silence of Americans, we talked in whispers to each other. And it was almost like being at a wake which it was was many thous, thousands times enlarged. And the emotions the Americans were very very noticeable as we sat there talking to the inmates and among ourselves as well.

Sandy: Tell me about the SS?

WILLIAM MCWORKMAN: The primary German we saw in this group was an what later turned out to be an SS soldier guard who had changed his clothes into civilian clothes, had a black vest on and we took his picture, which turned out very well. He was standing knee-deep in bodies which were not burning but were stacked up ready for burning. And I would imagine those bodies came up above his knees and he was standing there talking to himself a little bit, kind of muttering, professing his innocence and he had his head shaved like an SS trooper would. We were told by Holocaust people who got some history on him that he was killed the next day by an inmate prisoner who hit him with a board after months of being mistreated and killed him. So it was just rewards for his wonderful work for the Nazi Reich. Is that enough?

Sandy: Yeah. One other thing. Talk to me about what you thought you and the other servicemen could or couldn't do.

WILLIAM MCWORKMAN: As we viewed this terrible scene, I think most of us did think of what we could do to relieve the situation. Our battalion surgeon was with us and he said: Do not feed, overfeed these people immediately. They won't be able to take it and it'll possibly kill some of them. So we were very careful. We did give them K rations with the admonition to treat it carefully and and not try to eat very much at a time. There were already people arriving from some of the rear echelons who took these people attempted to segregate them into those who were in dying condition and those who were a little bit better and so forth and so on. We remember one building was marked contagious diseases. And of course, we stayed away from that at the moment and later people came in and made just triage of what should be done with those people. It appeared to be an enormous problem and it appeared even more so as we learned of the extent of these camps and the deprivations that the prisoners had undergone during that.

Sandy: One other thing that you mentioned to Diana was the expression on the faces even in death.

WILLIAM MCWORKMAN: Yes, eh, the expressions on the faces of the dead people was one of pain, horror, a few of relief, many of them were beaten to death, but particularly the grotesque countenances of those who had been put in these long pit housing with a wooden roof over the top and locked the door and then set on fire. You could see them crawling to the edge, you could

see a hand clawing its way, trying to claw its way out of that place. And you can imagine what kind of a death that might have been. This was appeared on all of them. A reaction that I had after I left the camp was that we were so shocked by the appearance of the hundreds of bodies that were in here, stack of maybe 5 or 6 hundred in one spot, and 3 or 4 hundred in another, was that we were so aghast that I think we spent more time looking at that than we did at trying to take immediate care of the those who were living. As I look back on it 50 years later, I would have spent more of my time trying to comfort more of the living and trying to find out if they knew of any of their particular friend who were there and so forth but we didn't do that. We were all so shocked by the .....