

MILTON SHURR  
RG-50.470.0020

Milton Shurr was part of a displaced persons team (DP2 unit) attached to the 1st Army from Fall of 1944. Team consisted of American officers and enlisted men who were in Verviers, Belgium. He had previously worked as head of a Jewish community counsel in Oklahoma City. There were also several French, Dutch and Belgians attached to his unit up until the Battle of the Bulge. There were about 500 displaced persons and they had to dig trenches, bring water, etc. He got hepatitis and rejoined regiment in April 1945 in Wetzlar, Germany. From there they went to Buchenwald. He describes seeing barracks with 2 story bunks and 6 people in each slot, horrible smells., buildings full of clothes and shoes. He describes piles of bodies because they had run out of coal to burn them.

About 50,000 had died and there were about 15,000 survivors. He describes a "hot Car" racket where they repainted German trucks. They disinfected survivors with DDT, but still about 300 died each day. They had been existing on about 600 calories a day, enough to keep them alive for 6 months. There were some important people who had been in camp; Leon Blum, one of the royals of Italy, as well as politicians and criminals.

Shurr claimed that one of his colleagues who spoke German and acted as their interpreter. After listening to the survivors' stories, he went insane and never recovered. Shurr did not talk to survivors, but dealt with administration. Allied prisoners were sent home, but many of survivors from eastern countries did not want to go back. The Red Cross came to try to find families of survivors. He was told by the Joint to deal with about 2000 children, one of whom was Elie Weisel (but he didn't know him).

Shurr was in Buchenwald until April, when the area of Thuringia was turned over to the Russians according to the July 1 agreement.

He mentions paying the Poles in the DP camp with cigarettes to run trucks. The interpreter was a Czech from a rich family who spoke many languages.