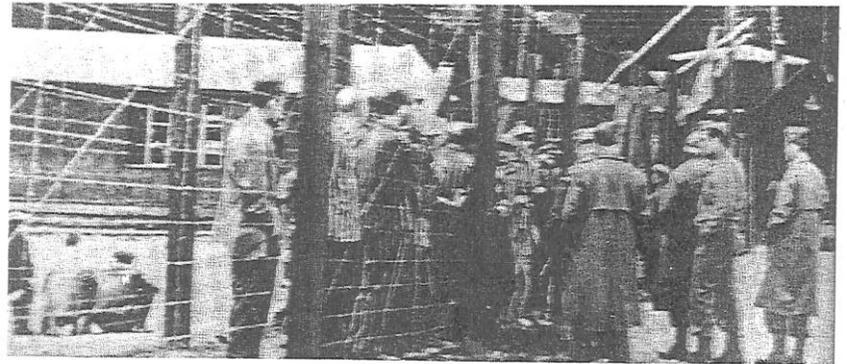


The 522nd Encounter with the Holocaust

In the last week in April 1945 as the 522nd was engaged in chasing the fleeing German army toward the Austrian border as one of the lead units of the advancing U.S. 7th Army troops, scouts of the 522nd stumbled across an unanticipated horrifying evidence of man's indescribable inhumanity to man—the Nazi Holocaust. The 522nd Dachau Research Committee's report on the 522nd encounter with the Holocaust follows:

I.

The 522nd crossed the Danube River at Lauingen-Dillingen on April 26, 1945 and for the next critical seven days the 522nd line of march was to turn southeast below Augsburg and Munich and pass through "the Holocaust corridor" where the infamous Dachau Concentration Camp and some 140 of its subcamps (*Kommandos*) were located. The Dachau Camp was a former munitions factory which was enlarged to house 30,000 inmates and became one of the oldest and biggest concentration camps built by the Nazis where the most important enemies of the Third Reich were detained. Dachau was interdependent upon and surrounded by about 140 feeder and slave labor camps scattered throughout Bavarian Germany, some of which were known as "Dachau 1," "Dachau 2," "Dachau 3" and so on. [The names and/or locations of these "Dachau camps" are referred to and identified in italics.] Men of the 522nd were wholly unaware of the existence of this elaborate system of Nazi concen-



tration camps that lay in the path of their advance and were totally unprepared for the scenes of atrocious Nazi bestiality and genocide they were to encounter.

By mid-April 1945, the German army was in complete chaos and in full retreat from the American forces hot in pursuit, the 522nd often times speeding down German autobahns and sometimes finding itself miles ahead of the advancing American infantry. So fast was the pace of pursuit that 522nd soldiers cannot remember the names, locations and details of the towns and camps in the Holocaust Corridor they passed through. 522nd Journals show that the 522nd CP passed through *Horgau*, *Lechfeld* and *Bad Tolz* which housed subcamps of Dachau. Meanwhile, forward observers of Batteries A, B and C assigned to various units of the 12th Infantry Regiment of the 4th Infantry Division motored forward in search of firing positions 10 to 20 kilometers on either side of the 522nd main line of march. Thus, while the 522nd command post advanced in a line of march west and south of the main Dachau Camp, 522nd personnel spread out and across the broad swath of its main line of march which could have

Above.
Concentration
Camp prisoners
as they are being
released by our
U.S. Forces.

PHOTO - NAT. ARCHIVES

not only passed through Dachau itself but possibly encountered any one of more than 34 Dachau subcamps that lay within the swath of its broad advance between April 26 and May 3, 1945. [See Map on page 76 - 522 Line of March and Dachau Camp Locations]

II.

Even before crossing the Danube, the 522nd line of march passed near or directly over the *Ellwangen* and *Heidenheim* concentration camps.

On April 22 after crossing the Danube, the 522nd established CPs at Ailingen and Holzheim located roughly 6 kilometers below the *Lauingen* subcamp and about 10 kilometers north of the *Burgau* subcamp.

On April 27, the 522nd stopped at Altenmunster, *Horgau* and Rommelsreid. The *Asbach* subcamp was situated 12 kilometers north of *Horgau*. The *Horgau* subcamp was probably the camp which was busted open by an American Tank Destroyer as witnessed by Tadashi Tojo and Robert Sugai of A Battery.

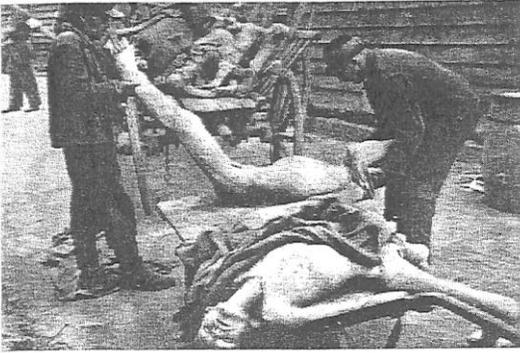
On April 28, the 522nd displaced to Anhausen, Bergheim, and Bobingen; roughly 6-12 kilometers south of *Augsburg*, which had a large concentration camp of its own, and less than 6 kilometers south of the *Haustetten* subcamp.

On April 29, the date when the main Dachau Camp was being liberated by elements of the 42nd, 45th and 20th Armored Divisions, the 522nd made five displacements through *Lager-Lechfeld*, Scheuring, Walleshausen, Geltendorf and Turkenfeld, passing directly through the *Lechfeld* subcamp location, and passed within 6-15 kilometers north of six other Dachau subcamps, viz., *Schwabegg*, *Schwabmunchen*, *Hurlach*, *Kaufering*, *Landsberg* and *Erpfting*. Two subcamps *Mittelneufnach* and *Turkheim* lay 20-25 kilometers to the south of the 522nd main line of march. On this date the 522nd firing batteries were assigned to the 12th Infantry Regiment whose line of march might have been north of the 522nd's path and headed in a direction toward



At Right.
Concentration
Camp inmates
roaming the streets
of Waakirchen by
the 522 Battalion CP.

PHOTO - S. ITO



the Dachau-Munich sector.

On April 30, the 522nd passed through Webling and Starnberg, which are less than 20 kilometers south of Munich and 25 kilometers south of Dachau itself. Fourteen subcamps in the immediate Dachau-Munich area would come within the range of advance scout teams of the 522nd dispersed north of the line of march, namely, *Dachau*, *Eching*, *Ampermoching*, *Schleisheim*, *Karlsfeld*, *Allach*, *Aubing*, *Punchheim*, *Gemmering*, *Munich*, *Hohenbrunn* and *Ottobrunn*. Two subcamps *Feldafing* and *Tutzing* lay a mere 6-10 kilometers south of Starnberg.

On May 1, the 522nd passed through the towns of Egling, Neufahrn and Ascholding where the *Wolfratshausen* and *Gelting* subcamps were located only 5 kilometers to the south of the main 522nd advance.

On May 2, the 522nd reached and established its CP at Waakirchen after passing directly through the *Bad Tolz* subcamp. The *Gmund* subcamp was situated 5 kilometers from Waakirchen. Between *Bad Tolz* and Waakirchen the 522nd intercepted and encountered thousands of survivors of the *Kaufering* and *Dachau* "death marches" on the roadside and gave shelter, clothing, food and medical attention to the now freed prisoners of the Holocaust. So while the 522nd makes no claim that it "liberated Dachau," it can clearly prove that it was the first American military unit to overtake the "Dachau death

march" and to "liberate" thousands of its weakened and starving survivors on the road to Waakirchen.

Since the 522nd pursuit of the retreating Nazi Army was so fast and fluid, covering the 125 kilometers between the Danube to Waakirchen in only 6 days, and since their encounter with the Holocaust tragedy and its victims was so completely unexpected and shockingly traumatic, men of the 522nd did not record, nor do they presently recall the specific dates, names, locations and details of the Dachau concentration subcamps they encountered, except to refer to them generally as the "Dachau camps." Research efforts on the 522nd FAB encounter with the Holocaust is ongoing and will continue to attempt to identify and to verify exactly what "Dachau camps" were encountered by men of the 522nd and every specific evidence of their encounter with the Holocaust that they experienced and can recall.

[The Historical Album Committee of The 522 Field Artillery Battalion of the 442 Regimental Combat Team. *FIRE FOR EFFECT*. Fisher Printing Co., Inc. 1998]

At Left. German citizens directed to remove and relocate the prisoner cadavers from the Concentration Camps left behind by the retreating defeated Nazi army.

PHOTO - NAT. ARCHIVES