

Harold Sandow Pfc.
51st Sta Hospital
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Halle, Germany May 13, 1945

Overview of the 51st Station Hospital in 1945

The 51st Station Hospital was a key medical unit during World War II, providing essential care to soldiers. By 1945, it had established a significant presence in Europe, particularly following the D-Day invasion.

Key Features

ATTRIBUTE	DETAILS
Type	Station Hospital
Location	Various locations in Europe, including Germany
Personnel	Comprised of medical officers, nurses, and enlisted men
Capacity	Initially designed for 750 beds
Function	Treated severe cases, including chest and abdominal injuries

Operations in 1945

- The hospital was involved in treating soldiers injured during combat, particularly during the push into Germany.

- It handled a variety of cases, including severe trauma and shock, ensuring that patients received immediate care.
- The unit was known for its rapid response and ability to set up operations quickly in forward areas.

Historical Significance

The 51st Station Hospital played a crucial role in the medical support of U.S. forces during the European Theater. Its operations contributed to the overall effectiveness of military medical care during the war, showcasing the importance of field hospitals in combat situations.

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Liberation of Nordhausen Concentration Camp

On April 12, 1945, their platoon was the first medical unit on the scene of the gruesome German death camp, Nordhausen, as it was being liberated. They found dead bodies stacked on top of each other like “cordwood”.

The nurses patched up the wounds of the living and helped where they could. Dysentery was a major problem as they attempted to feed the liberated prisoners. This particular prisoner of war camp did not have gas chambers, but instead held political prisoners. They weren’t fed enough to live on; if they could no longer work, they were left to starve.

The air hung with the odor of burning flesh from the crematoriums which were still burning when the platoon arrived. There were small white flakes in the air, much like a bonfire, but the smell was awful; one you never would forget. Her husband, Russ, was one of the first in to liberate Auschwitz. Later, they would talk to each other about these horrific experiences and that seemed to help.

“When Hitler finally surrendered on May 7, 1945, we were deep into Russian territory in Berlin,” said Joy. “We were afraid at first, being leery of the Russians, but no issues arose and when we left we turned the hospital over to them.”

The 51st stayed on for another 6 months as the war with Japan had not yet ended. Preparations were being made to get shipped there next. Fortunately, Japan surrendered on September 2, 1945. Their work of the 51st was completed and they boarded a ship for home.

Joy was discharged in November of 1945, earlier than her husband, Russ, as she had accumulated more military points. Points are earned for service time, bonus points are earned for overseas and active combat. Russ joined her at home in January 1946.

Source: *The Nurse Who Went to War* by Susan Harrison Wolffis, Muskegon Chronicle, March 31, 2002

51st Field Hospital outcomes

1 April 1945 – 30 April 1945

From 19 April to 30 April 1945, the 51st Field Hospital remained in bivouac at Halle, Germany, and was able to reorganize all equipment and vehicles for further operations. The following types of cases were admitted and treated by the organization: 314 military and 410 civilian (mostly DPs). Total admissions numbered 724, with 86 deaths.

1 May 1945 – 31 May 1945

On 1 May 1945, the entire 51st Field Hospital was established at Halle, Germany. Between 11 June 1944 and 8 May 1945, the Hospital handled a total of 9,763 casualties with a total of 786 deaths. The organization performed 5,407 surgical operations, with 457 post-operative deaths.

1st Hospital Unit – on 1 May 1945, the 1st Unit was in bivouac with the entire Hospital at Halle in Germany. On 4 May, the Unit opened to receive patients as a Field Hospital in Leipzig, Germany. At the time it supported VII Corps (receiving casualties from the 69th and 104th Infantry Divisions) which was making its final push to the Elbe and effecting a link-up with the Soviet Armies. At the cessation of hostilities, 8 May 1945, the organization was still open for receiving, and shortly thereafter began functioning as a provisional Station Hospital. Between 1 and 8 May it treated 107 patients, with 1 death.

During the month of May, the following types of cases were admitted and treated by the Unit: 622 military (with 5 deaths) and 628 civilian (with 5 deaths).

2d Hospital Unit – on 1 May 1945, the Unit was bivouacked on the Luftwaffe airfield at Halle, Germany, where it remained up to 15 May. It was closed between 1 – 8 May. The 2d Unit subsequently moved on to Bad Frankenhausen, Germany, to set up in the capacity of Station Hospital supporting all troops in the VII Corps area. Because of the lack of sufficient suitable buildings, it was necessary to house everyone in tents. On 4 July, the Soviets took over Bad Frankenhausen and the organization had to move to Salzboden. A rear detail remained behind for three days to take care of 4 non-transportable cases, and then joined the main body at the new location. The following cases were received and treated: 150 military and 2 civilian.

3d Hospital Unit – from 24 April to 15 May 1945, the Unit was also in bivouac at Halle, Germany, with a temporary closing from 1 to 8 May 1945. From 16 May up to 19 May it moved to set up at Kassel, Germany, where it functioned as a Station Hospital. Only 21 patients were received during this period. From 20 May the 3d Unit was once more on the move to another location at Heiligenstadt, where it remained until 5 July 1945. A total of 108 patients were admitted for treatment.

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Troops of the 104th Infantry Division (Timberwolves) enter Halle, Germany, which they captured after a five-day struggle lasting from 15 to 19 April 1945. The entire 51st Field Hospital set up at Halle starting 19 April and remained in bivouac on site until 30 April 1945.



Vintage photo illustrating burial of Dora-Nordhausen Concentration Camp victims after the Camp's liberation 13-14 April 1945. German civilian and military authorities were compelled to help with recovery and burial operations and forced to pass by the mass graves to witness the horrible and tragic death of

the many inmates by the Concentration Camp authorities. The 3d Hospitalization Unit, 51st Field Hospital, set up a temporary Surgical Hospital in the Camp between 12-17 April 1945 to help alleviate the suffering and offer treatment and care to the survivors.

1 June 1945 – 30 June 1945

1st Hospital Unit – on 1 June, the Unit was still operating at Leipzig, Germany, where it was housed in buildings. During this period VII Corps was relieved by XXIII Corps and the 1st Unit now received patients from these troops. It also received many civilian patients who had been political prisoners of the Germans and were being returned to the American Zone from the Russian-occupied sector. The following cases were received for treatment during June: 503 military (with 2 deaths) and 537 civilian (with 2 deaths).

2d Hospital Unit – from 1 June up to 3 June 1945, the following patients were admitted and treated at the Unit: 310 military and 1 civilian. Because of the lack of suitable sized buildings, the installation had to set up in tents.

3d Hospital Unit – from 20 May to 5 July 1945, the organization remained in operation at Heiligenstadt, in some requisitioned buildings.

1 July 1945 – 31 July 1945

In July 1945, all three Hospital Units of the 51st were operating as Station Hospitals in the same location as at the close of 30 June 1945. The 1st at Leipzig, the 2d at Bad Frankenhausen and the 3d at Heiligenstadt, all in Germany. They were all supporting VII Corps field units. Early July brought some confusion as the Hospital now came under control of TUSA, which ordered all units to proceed to a bivouac area at Salzbaden, Germany, where they remained until 13 July. Redeployment was delayed and movement didn't start until 19 August 1945.

1st Hospital Unit – on 2 July 1945, at 0100 hours exactly, the Unit closed at Leipzig, Germany, and on this date the 41 remaining patients were discharged from the Hospital. This move was necessary because the Soviet Occupation Forces were moving into the city. It first bivouacked at Heiligenstadt before moving on to Salzbaden the next bivouac area. On 14 July, the Unit closed at Salzbaden and moved further to Weiden to act as medical support for the 90th Infantry Division. During the month of July the following cases were admitted and treated: 41 military and no civilian, with no deaths.

Utilization of Field Hospitals:

The 13th, 45th, and 51st Field Hospitals were to be placed in support of the VIII, V, and VII Corps respectively, and each to be given the mission of locating in three separate places in each of the corps zones for reception and care of American patients. The 47th Field Hospital was to be used to cover troop concentration in the army area, while the 84th Field Hospital was to be held in reserve to cover the possible extension of V Corps to the south. Field hospitals were to be used in the same manner as evacuation hospitals and were to receive the same type cases.

In early May orders were issued by the army to hospital and group commanders to move units and to take over missions as listed in the preceding paragraphs. However, there were minor changes in the original plan and medical units were functioning finally as follows:

Evacuation Hospitals:

2nd Evacuation Hospital-Naumberg 1-8 May. Open entire period.

5th Evacuation Hospital-Eudenbach 1-3 May. Gotha 4-8 May. Open 6-8 May.

44th Evacuation Hospital-Nordhausen 1-8 May. Open 7-8 May.

45th Evacuation Hospital-Weimar 1-8 May. Open entire period as Station Hospital for Buchenwald Concentration Camp.

67th Evacuation Hospital-Edingen 1-3 May. Bayreuth 4-8 May. Open 6-8 May.

96th Evacuation Hospital-Nietleben (Halle) 1-8 May. Open 1-5 May.

97th Evacuation Hospital-Duderstadt 1-4 May. Weimar 5-8 May. Closed entire period.

102nd Evacuation Hospital-Gera 1-8 May. Open entire period.

103rd Evacuation Hospital-Zeulenroda 1-8 May. Open entire period.

118th Evacuation Hospital-Zeulenroda 1-8 May. Closed entire period.

126th Evacuation Hospital-Korbach 1 May. Gera 2-8 May. Closed entire period.

128th Evacuation Hospital-Grafenwohr 1-8 May. Open 5-8 May.

134th Evacuation Hospital-Weimar 1-3 May. Nietleben 4-8 May. Open 5-8 May.

Evacuation Hospitals in RAMP, PW, and DP Service:

5th Evacuation Hospital-Feeding point for transient RAMP's at Gotha.

45th Evacuation Hospital-Station Hospital for Buchenwald Concentration Camp.

67th Evacuation Hospital-Feeding point for transient RAMP's at Bayreuth.

96th Evacuation Hospital-Feeding point for transient RAMP's at Merseburg.

97th Evacuation Hospital-PW and DP Service. Feeding point for transient RAMP's at Weimar.

118th Evacuation Hospital-RAMP, PW, and DP Service.

126th Evacuation Hospital-RAMP, PW, and DP Service.

Convalescent Hospitals:

4th Convalescent Hospital-Arolsen 1-8 May. Open entire period.

Field Hospitals:

13th Field Hospital-1st HU-Berleburg 1-3 May. Kirchchain 4-8 May. Open 4-8 May as Station Hospital.

2nd HU-Eisenach 1-8, May. Open entire period.

3rd HU-Wipperfurth 1-4 May. Friedrichroda 5-8 May. Open 1 May as Station Hospital.

45th Field Hospital-1st HU-Weiden 1-8 May. Open entire period.

2nd HU-Weisenfels 1-2 May. Weiden 3 May. Waidmunchen 4-5 May. Stankov 7 May. Pilzen 8 May. Open entire period.

3rd HU-Borna 1-5 May. Weiden 6-8 May. Open 8 May.

47th Field Hospital-1st HU-Geissen 1-8 May. Open entire period as Station Hospital.

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2nd HU-Weimar 1-8 May. Open entire period as Station Hospital.

3rd HU-Schwartzenbach 1-8 May. Open entire period as Station Hospital.

51st Field Hospital-1st HU- Halle 1-3 May. Leipzig 4-8 May. Open 4-8 May supporting 69th and 104th Divisions.

2nd HU-Halle 1-8 May. Closed entire period.

3rd HU-Halle 1-8 May. Closed entire period.

84th Field Hospital-1st HU-Weimar 1-8 May. Closed entire period.

2nd HU-Weimar 1-8 May. Closed entire period.

3rd HU-Altenburg 1-8 May. TD with 618th Med Ctr Co entire period.

The Liberation of Nordhausen Concentration Camp

On March 30, 1945, the U.S. 3rd Armored Division made a startling discovery at the Nordhausen Concentration Camp the same day its commander was killed near Paderborn, Germany.

This article appears in: [February 2019](#)

By Steve Ossad

After leading his U.S. 3rd Armored “Spearhead” Division on the longest, one-day, enemy-opposed mechanized advance in American history, Maj. Gen. Maurice Rose was killed in action on March 30, 1945, one of 30 flag officers who fell in World War II, and the only armored division commander ever lost in combat.

However, the march of the 3rd Armored Division did not end with the death of its commander or before its men confronted the full meaning of Nazism. Like other fighting divisions, the various units within 3rd Armored prepared after-action reports for April 1945 that document military operations, including liberations, but the official records, archival sources, personal memoirs, photos, etc., vary considerably concerning discovery of the atrocities and the actual places where the horror was perpetrated.

As one example, the 82nd Airborne Division final after-action report (AAR) contains a single paragraph in the Military Government section about “the discovery of a concentration camp at WOBBELIN” and the medical and humanitarian efforts undertaken, including a forced reburial of victims by the local population, a virtual constant in American AARs. In the case of the 3rd Armored Division, the recollections of individual soldiers, unit AARs, and the semi-official history, *Spearhead in the West*, offer a more detailed description of the liberation of a notorious concentration camp as part of military operations in the last days of the war in Germany—less than two weeks after Maurice Rose, the highest ranking Jewish American officer in the U.S. Army, was cut down in combat in the act of surrendering.

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Shortly after their liberation, two emaciated inmates of the Nordhausen concentration camp stare blankly from hollow eyes.

KZ (Konzentrationslager, i.e., Concentration Camp) Dora-Mittelbau was built in central Germany near the town of Nordhausen, by which name the entire camp complex is now commonly, but erroneously, known. The blandly named Mittelbau (translation, "central construction") camp was initially established as a sub-camp of KZ Buchenwald, when the SS sent a detail of 120 slaves to expand a large underground Wehrmacht fuel depot to produce V-2 ballistic missiles after the existing production sites became the target of Allied bombers. When the main V-2 effort shifted from Peenemunde to Mittelbau, the site became an independent concentration camp in late October 1944, eventually encompassing more than 40 subcamps of its own, spread out over the immediate area. The first inmates, who built the facilities, were initially kept underground in the dark, unventilated tunnels, referred to as "Dora" in official documents of "Mittelbau GmbH," the business unit set up by Armaments Minister Albert Speer's vast empire, which oversaw the production site. The main factory area inside the tunnels was often referred to as Mittelwerk ("middle works.") The SS ran all the camps, provided the slave labor at very reasonable negotiated rates, and the supply was constantly "replenished."



General Maurice Rose, commander of the U.S. 3rd Armored Division, was killed in an act of treachery, and his troops were enraged by the incident.

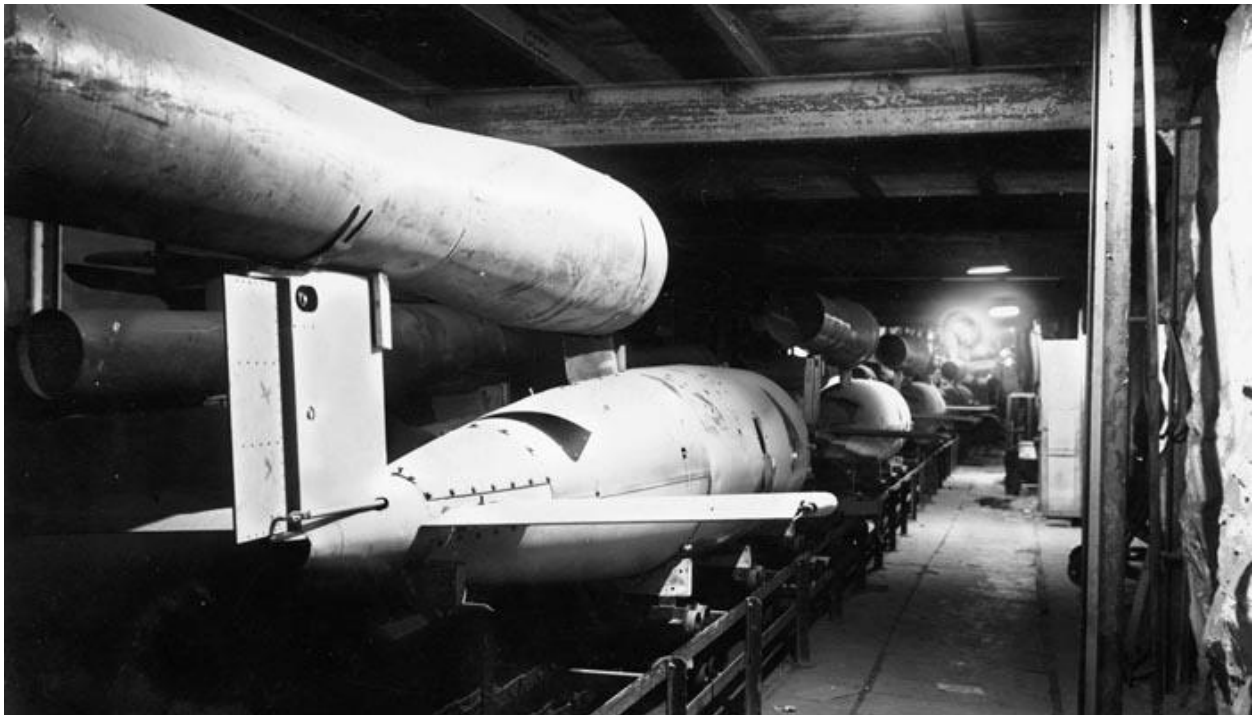
Brutalized in miserable conditions, with minimal food, sanitation, heating, or light, the condemned slaves slept on wood racks, four levels high. The daily ration consisted of four ounces of black bread and a liter of potato soup—the former more sawdust than flour, and the latter diluted foul water without nourishment—which only stoked the constant hunger and dysentery. Industrial-level noise from moving and operating heavy manufacturing equipment and blasting through rock never ceased, and the air was befouled by noxious and deadly gases from explosives, fuel, and toxic metal dust. Vermin of all kinds and diseases long thought eradicated, such as tuberculosis, typhus, and pneumonia, flourished. The daily death rate during early construction and the last few months of the war soared, and the used-up slaves were “selected,” temporarily warehoused near the rail tracks, and shipped to KZ Mauthausen and other places for extermination.

Once full V-2 production began in the autumn of 1944, the Mittelbau complex held about 20,000 slaves, most working on outdoor construction, and about 6,000 in the tunnels. Dora-Mittelwerk produced 600-700 missiles per month on average, short of the monthly goal of 900 but nevertheless a significant achievement, especially after the Luftwaffe commandeered 40 percent of tunnel capacity for Junkers aircraft engine assembly. The enterprise was a model of efficiency, earning official commendations for

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the top managers, engineers, and SS staff, several of whom, including the last commandant, were prominent Auschwitz veterans.

The first V-2 rockets struck London on September 8, 1944, with the final launches on March 27, 1945. In the nearly seven months of attacks more than 3,000 warheads hit Allied cities, including Antwerp, Liege, and Paris. The ballistic missiles targeting London, most of which were produced in the Dora tunnels, killed about 2,500 civilians, injuring more than 6,000. During its existence as an underground, state-of-the-art, slave-based multi-facility manufacturing site—the final evolution of the SS master-slave economic system—more than 20,000 people from all over Europe were murdered or died from starvation, disease, or random executions at KZ Dora-Mittelbau, a labor cost of seven to eight slaves per V-2 rocket, which would kill or wound three to five civilians.



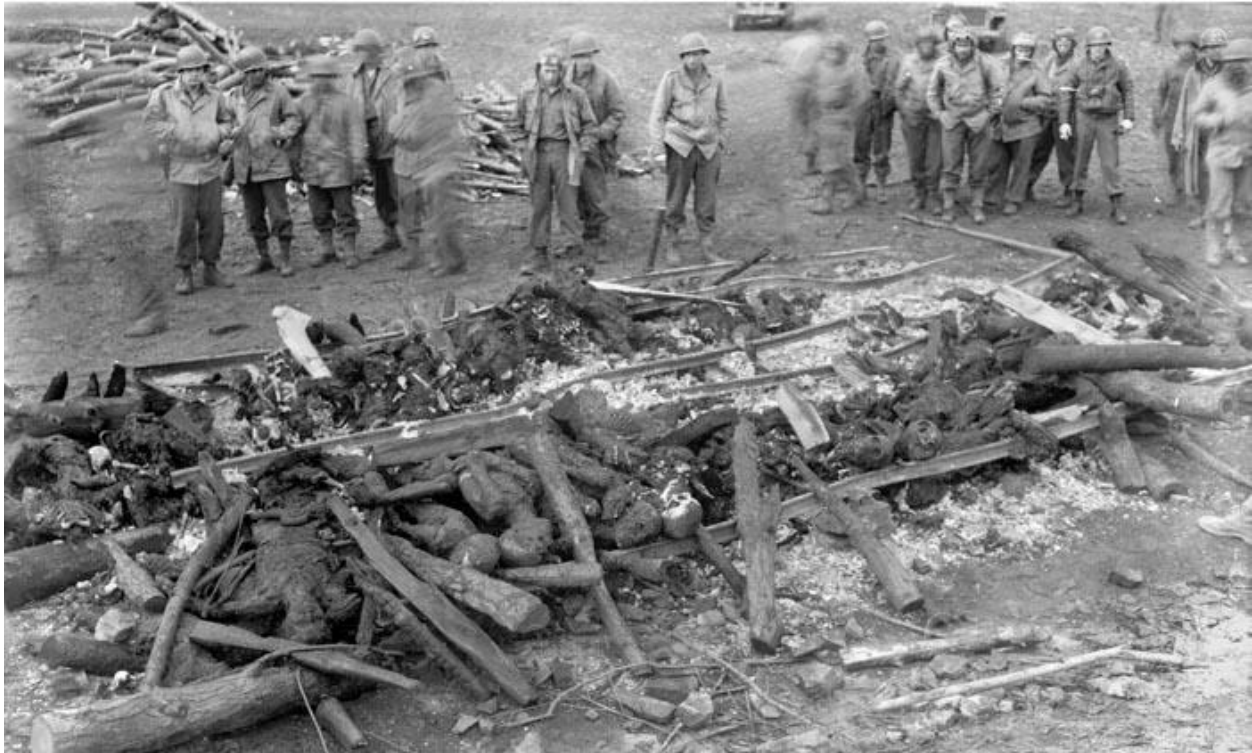
A German V-1 buzz bomb sits on the assembly line near Nordhausen. Many camp inmates worked as slave labor to assemble the flying bombs.

In early April 1945, as the Allies approached, consistent with Reich policy to leave no evidence of the mass murder behind, the SS began evacuations of the Dora-Mittelbau inmates north to KZ Bergen-Belsen, a mass collection point for the surviving prisoners of the crumbling Nazi empire. Thousands were murdered before and during the death marches, and by the time American forces arrived at Nordhausen few living prisoners remained. The 3rd Armored Division first entered the camp complex at an accidentally bombed and ruined barracks overflowing with corpses, called the Boelcke Kaserne.

Brigadier General Truman E. Boudinot, one-time champion Army free balloon racer and veteran tank commander of Combat Command B (CCB), one of two brigade-sized striking forces of the 3rd Armored "Spearhead" Division, had been driving his men hard for weeks. Starting with the breakout from the Remagen Bridge in early March 1945, the division spearheaded VII Corps, First Army, the southern pincer of 12th Army Group's tightening grip on the industrial Ruhr region where the remnants of several German armies were trapped. When 3rd Armored met the tanks of the northern pincer, the U.S. Ninth Army led by the 2nd Armored "Hell on Wheels" Division, on April 1, 1945, the escape route slammed shut on the greatest encirclement battle in American history, with more than 350,000 prisoners bagged and German Army Group B destroyed. Field Marshal Walter Model, known as "Hitler's Fireman" and the longtime battlefield opponent of Lt. Gen. Omar Bradley, killed himself rather than surrender. Although the bloodletting would continue without pause until 3rd Armored reached the town of Dessau on the Elbe, the original mission of General Dwight D. Eisenhower's SHAEF was essentially complete. The industrial heart and war-making capability of the Third Reich, and its armed forces in the West, had been destroyed.

A week and a half after closing the Ruhr Pocket, General Boudinot was attacking into the Harz Mountains, where the high command believed strong German forces were gathering. Early on April 11, 1945, he received orders to take the town of Nordhausen. The rest of 3rd Armored, now commanded by Brig. Gen. Doyle O. Hickey, would continue the attack toward the mountains. The two task forces of CCB were built around Colonel John C. Welborn's 33rd Armored Regiment and Lt. Col. William B. Lovelady's 3rd Battalion and were moving abreast on two easterly routes. Lovelady entered the town near the railroad tracks and marked it on his map as a Luftwaffe base. He reported a large prison-type compound and requested more infantry support from Maj. Gen. "Terrible" Terry Allen's 104th "Timberwolf" Infantry Division, which was attached to VII Corps and moving to the north.

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American soldiers stare aghast at a large pyre where German guards had placed the bodies of victims of their cruelty at the Nordhausen concentration camp. Apparently, the cremation of the bodies was incomplete when the German guards fled the camp. The main Mittelbau camp was surrounded by an electrified barbed-wire fence and watchtowers. A large roll call area, where prisoners were assembled and counted several times a day, was located just west of the main entrance. The SS guard quarters lay farther east, outside the wire, where resistance was scattered, disorganized, and brief. No elements from the German Eleventh Army were encountered. Northeast of the main camp, from which the slaves were marched to work at 0400 and 1600 hours for 12-hour shifts of hard labor every day, camouflaged entrances led to the underground factory manufacturing Hitler's "weapons of retaliation" (Vergeltungswaffen), the 40-foot-high V-2 ballistic missile packing 1,600 pounds of high explosive and the V-1 early-generation cruise missile (known as the flying bomb or "doodlebug"). The capture of Dora and the V-2 assembly plant at Kleinbodungen were major strategic prizes for Allied air technical intelligence officers looking for missile and aircraft materials and personnel. Even as the war in Europe ended, each of the Western Allies and the Soviets were competing for technological advantages in the next, and colder, struggle to come.

At the deepest level of the underground complex ran two enormous shafts, dug 600 feet into a limestone ridge, each more than a mile long, more than 50 feet high, and housing a full assembly line, one for V-1s, the other for V-2s. Dozens of 500-foot-long cross-tunnels linking the main shafts were filled with machine tools and bomb-making material at various stages of production. German engineers had already begun

experiments on a secret V-3 anti-aircraft missile system. That program and the V-2 assembly plant and storage facilities claimed the most able-bodied of the slaves, mostly Reich political prisoners under the Nebel und Nacht edict, Polish and Soviet prisoners of war, a small number of specially selected Jews, and forced laborers from the conquered countries who dug the tunnels and were then worked to death on the production lines.



An American soldier inspects the interior of a German rocket engine after the Nordhausen concentration camp and surrounding area have been liberated and occupied in the last days of World War II.

Scattered inventory, and especially German scientists, were immediately secured and put under guard. Tons of documents and as many as 100 intact V-2s were crated and shipped back to the United States. Secrecy under the code name Operation Paperclip descended on Dora-Mittelbau with the birth of the American missile and, eventually, space programs, which would be run by some of the murderous Nazi masters of the tunnels. First among the known war criminals was SS Major Werner von Braun, who was a full and willing partner in all the camp's operations and atrocities. The American intelligence officers and government officials knew who their new partners were. Von Braun's deputy, Helmut Gotttrup, was captured by the Soviets and became a hero of their space program.

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So terrible was the magnitude of what General Boudinot saw that day that he ordered the headquarters company photographers and MPs, as well as the newsmen, to gather evidence. The dead were left where they lay. A brief film called *The Liberation of Nordhausen* and later film compilations showing the camp and shot by the division and corps cameramen are still powerful testimony. Even for veterans of the most gruesome armored combat, men used to violent death and the human wreckage and casual brutality of the battlefield, the conditions they encountered left them shaking with rage, some openly weeping. As they progressed through the place, the troops eventually discovered more than 5,000 bodies in the partially destroyed barracks, lying about or stacked for burning at the crematory located in the north of the main camp. The very few alive lay scattered among the mass of corpses, as described in the division official history: "Emaciated, ragged shapes whose fever-bright eyes waited passively, even in the same beds with their dead and dying comrades, too weak to move. Over all the area clung the terrible odor of decomposition and, like a dirge of forlorn hope, the combined cries of these unfortunates rose and fell in weak undulations. It was a fabric of moans and whimpers, of delirium and outright madness. Here and there a single shape tottered about, walking slowly, like a man dreaming."



Under the watchful eyes of American soldiers, German civilians from a nearby town are pressed into service digging mass graves for the many victims of Nordhausen who were starved or beaten to death.

To the starving and half-crazed inmates, the arrival of the soldiers and vehicles bearing the white star was a miracle from God. Men barely able to move kissed the filthy boots of the soldiers, murmuring their prayers of thanksgiving in a Babel of languages. One group of hysterically happy liberated souls attempted to hoist Lieutenant Herbert Gontard onto their shoulders. Although he was a slim young man, the weakened laborers could not lift him off the ground. Sergeant Ragene Farris, a medic in the 329th Medical Battalion, saw "rows upon rows of skin-covered skeletons ... men lay as they had starved, discolored, and lying in indescribable human filth. Their striped coats and prison numbers hung to their frames as a last token or symbol of those who enslaved and killed them.... I noticed one girl. I would say she was about seventeen years old. She lay where she had fallen, gangrened and naked. I choked up, couldn't quite understand how and why anyone could do these things.... We went downstairs into a filth indescribable, accompanied by a horrible dead-rot stench.... One hunched down French boy was huddled up against a dead comrade, as if to keep warm.... It was like stepping into the Dark Ages to walk into one of these cellar-cells and seek out the living."

Medics removed 250 starvation cases immediately and hastily set up emergency hospitals. Less severe cases of all sorts were treated on site, but for many there was no hope. Major Martin L. Sherman, a doctor in the 3rd Armored's 45th Medical Battalion, estimated that even with immediate assistance no more than half the starvation patients would survive. General Hickey, teeth tightly clenched on his ever-present pipe and accompanied by his corps commander, Maj. Gen. J. Lawton "Lightning Joe" Collins, toured the barracks. Collins was sick to his stomach and ordered Colonel Dell B. Hardin, his G-5 officer (civil affairs and military government) to round up all the male citizens of Nordhausen, the most prominent in the front, and force them into the camp.

That night Collins wrote to his wife, "We had the Burgomeister [sic] set aside a plot of ground overlooking the town, and these people were required to dig graves and carry every one of the dead up the hill and bury them. The local officials disclaimed any knowledge of the camp, which was, of course, tommyrot. We are going to require them to erect a monument in this cemetery as a memorial to these dead."

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A pair of jubilant former prisoners of Nordhausen poses in front of an assembly destined once for the V-2 intercontinental ballistic missile. Many Nordhausen inmates were worked to death by the Nazis.

Troops who liberated the camp, especially Colonel Lovelady's men who saw the Boelcke Kaserne, were infuriated when the local citizens insisted that they knew nothing of the atrocities. Private Harold Kennedy, one of Terry Allen's foot soldiers, saw the camp a few hours after liberation and could not believe the German civilians. "They always said, 'Well, we didn't know.' And I'd say, 'You could smell it, couldn't you?'" Lou "Louch" Baczewski, a Task Force Lovelady Sherman tank driver, describing decades later what he saw and smelled at the ruined barracks to his grandson, was overcome several times by the telling, rubbing his forehead, repeating over and over, "It was a bad sight. It was a bad sight. It was something terrible."

Still angry about the murder of General Rose just days before, the 3rd Armored needed no urging to get back into the fight and were in a "savage mood" as they went into the final battles. Several captured German scientists were publicly beaten for benefit of the cameras, and unconfirmed reports circulated that few prisoners were taken in the days immediately following the camp's liberation. After pausing for several hours to refuel, reload, and grab some rest, the VII Corps advance resumed early on April 12, 1945, the 3rd Armored Division Forward HQ entering Sangerhausen, 22 miles to the east, by midday. The Ruhr Pocket battle was eventually renamed the Rose Pocket to honor the fallen 3rd Armored commander. The war—and the killing—went on for another day. But not at KZ Dora-Mittelbau.

At a veterans' reunion to research the biography of Maj. Gen. Maurice Rose, a man came up to the author and introduced himself as Michael Kane, son of Lt. Col. Matthew

Kane, commander of Task Force Kane, 32nd Armored Regiment. Hero. Michael's mother had recently told him that his father, a traditional and tough Texas West Pointer who passed away when the boy was 10, had helped liberate the concentration camp at Nordhausen. She was concerned that revisionists were already claiming that the Holocaust had never happened. He was struck by her concern—she had never mentioned it or showed any interest—in truth he thought her conventionally, and passively, anti-Semitic. But now, facing death, she wanted her son to know his father's direct role as a "liberator." Michael was so engaged by the experience that he went to the reunion to prepare for a trip to Germany to commemorate the liberation of Nordhausen and to see the camp for himself. He wanted to tell the story.

On January 27, 1945, the Red Army liberated the death camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the last of the six SS extermination camps (Vernichtungslager), all on Polish soil, as well as many other horrible places in Germany. During the final six weeks of the war in Europe, American and British units liberated many of the main concentration camps as well as the network of sub-camps, slave labor, brothels, prison camps, and a dizzying array of other terrible facilities. Popular history has concentrated on a few notorious names, especially the first camps discovered, like Dachau and Buchenwald, but recent scholarship establishes that the Nazi system encompassed more than 40,000 separate installations with a death toll far beyond the latest generally accepted numbers.

Liberation was not limited to places of persecution, and a few days after taking Dora-Mittelbau the 3rd Armored Division freed 450 British POWs at Polleben, some having been captured at such early battles as Dunkirk, Norway, and Crete. The British 11th Armoured "Black Bull" Division liberated KZ Bergen-Belsen, burning that name in the British consciousness along with the image of bulldozers pushing thousands of emaciated corpses into a ditch.

On April 12, 1945, Supreme Allied Commander General Eisenhower and Generals Omar Bradley and George Patton went to KZ Ohrdruf, a sub-camp of Buchenwald and the first to be liberated by Patton's Third Army, to see for themselves. Bradley recalled the moment in his first memoir. "Eisenhower's face whitened into a mask. Patton walked over to a corner and sickened. I was too revolted to speak." They saw the evil they had defeated on the battlefield. As testimony, the surviving work of the U.S. and British cameramen created exactly the images that the generals and newsmen wanted and that mankind still needs to see, especially when Holocaust denial and ignorance is growing in the United States. Even more chilling, in the lands where the crimes happened, some groups celebrate the murderers with parades, statues, and dishonored flags.

The Center of Military History of the United States Army, advised by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, has credited 36 U.S. World War II Divisions—24th Infantry, 10th Armored, and 2nd Airborne—as "liberators," and their flags, adorned with campaign streamers, stand in honor at the museum in Washington, D.C.

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Author Steve Ossad has recently written a biography of General Omar Bradley published through the University of Missouri Press. He resides in New York City.

I'm enclosing the Nordhausen atrocity pictures in this letter darling and when you come to number 6 honey you'll see the very last thing in inhumanity. This baby and little girl were gassed, beaten and machine gunned to death as were all the rest and hundreds more like them. I passed by the graves of people only last week and believe me darling that the ones you see in the pictures are only a small minority as compared to the graves. When you think of the other murder camps, Dessau, Buchwald, Dachau, and the others you wonder how any of the refugees got away with their lives. I saw Dessau honey and it was one of the smaller ones compared to Nordhausen but I'll never forget it.

On the back of each photograph, he wrote a caption:

1. Refugees leaving Nordhausen on the long trek home.
2. Some of my buddies view of the gruesomeness of human "cord wood".
3. Nordhausen's victims lay stretched out for blocks.
4. More and more _____.
5. _____ and still more.
6. To the utter extreme of Nazi inhumanity.

Two weeks later, my mom replied.

The ones of Nordhausen were like the movies I saw darling only the movies were worse. There are a few people I would like to see these pictures as they don't believe the Germans did these things.

On July 6, 1945, my dad replied to mom and those who didn't think the Holocaust could happen in Germany.

I have 16 rolls of film left for my camera honey and if the sun ever stays out long enough I will send you some more pictures. You said that George's mother believes the Germans never committed atrocities such as those at Nordhausen, Dachau, Buchwald and Dessau and other places and it's easy to understand why they wouldn't. Its hard to believe honey but I seen it with my own eyes and what I've seen no one can make me deny. Do they think that for one minute the US would stand for pictures and stories as horrible as those to be released to the public if they weren't true? This is the very lowest extreme of inhumanity and I doubt that even the lowest form of animal life ever equaled it in its torture and treachery.