

CONFIDENTIAL

JAMES FREDERICK ZEISER
V-60128
27 July 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE:

1. On 27 July 1945, James Frederick ZEISER, Sgt., ASN-35142619, was interviewed at his home at 6712 Jersey Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio, and stated that he was one of a group of prisoners of war transported by rail from Paris, France, to Buchenwald concentration camp at Weymar, Germany.
2. Sgt. ZEISER stated that on 15 August 1944 about 170 American and British airmen, together with an unestimated number of French civilian political prisoners, were taken to a railway station in Paris and loaded into box cars of the "40 and 8" type, with 70 men to a car. The prisoners were transported to Buchenwald concentration camp located at Weymar, Germany, arriving on 20 August 1944.
3. ZEISER stated that the traveling conditions were very poor; that the men were crowded together with little space for rest; that sanitary conditions were bad and that prisoners were not supplied with sufficient food during the five day trip. Prisoners received a small amount of water twice daily and once a day received a piece of German bread and a small portion of canned meat. Were it not for the fact that the French Red Cross provided a food parcel, one parcel for two men, before the group left Paris, food shortage would have been very serious.
4. ZEISER recalled an incident on the trip in which a French civilian political prisoner was shot to death for no particular reason. The man was standing inside the box car, looking out the barbed-wire covered window and was clutching a wire with his right hand. The train had stopped and a German guard, for no reason, suddenly shot the Frenchman through the hand. The man bled freely and other prisoners called to the guards for medical attention, however, a guard opened the door and took the man out, roughly spun him around so that his back was to the guard and the guard then shot the man through the back. The Frenchman fell and rolled down a slight incline and the guard shot the fallen man several more times. The dead Frenchman was left in the railway ditch.
5. ZEISER recalled that the prisoners in the next box car loosened a floor board and that a number of prisoners escaped. When the guards discovered this, they made the remaining prisoners strip naked and were forced to make the remainder of the journey without protection of clothing.
6. ZEISER concluded by stating that he did not know the names of German guards or Officers who were responsible for the transportation of this group of prisoners of war.

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