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For The WAR CRIMES OFFICE

Judge Advocate General's Department -- War Department

United States of America

Handwritten initials and a checkmark.

In the matter of the exposure of American prisoners to Allied bombing at Buchenwald Concentration Camp on 24 August 1944. * Perpetuation of Testimony of James Frederick Zeiser, Sgt., ASN 35142619.

Taken at: 6712 Jersey Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio

Date: 27 July 1945

In the Presence of: Maynard E. Hanson, Special Agent, SIC, 5th SvC.

Questions by: Maynard E. Hanson

Questions:

- Q. State your name, rank, serial number, permanent home address, and the date and place of your birth.
- A. James Frederick Zeiser, Sgt., ASN 35142619. My permanent home address is 6712 Jersey Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio. I was born on 29 April 1915 in Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Q. What educational institutions did you attend?
- A. I graduated from high school in Cincinnati, Ohio, and then attended a six-months course at the Sage Institute of Neon, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Q. What was your civilian occupation?
- A. I operated a neon sign business in Lafayette, Indiana, for about two years.
- Q. Have you recently returned to the United States from overseas?
- A. Yes, I arrived on 11 June 1945 at Boston, Massachusetts.
- Q. Were you a prisoner of war?
- A. Yes, for about 10 months in France and Germany.
- Q. Will you state where you were held prisoner and the dates of your imprisonment?
- A. I was captured in Paris, France, on 11 July 1944 and taken to the Fresnes prison in the northern part of Paris and I was held prisoner there until 15 August 1944. I was moved by rail from Fresnes prison to Buchenwald concentration camp at Weymar, Germany, where I was held from 20 August 1944 to 19 October 1944 when I was transferred to Stalag Luft #III, at Sagan, Germany, where I was imprisoned from 21 October 1944 to 27 January 1945. I was then transferred to Stalag 7 A, at Moosburg, Germany, where I remained prisoner until my liberation.

Exposure of PWs to bombing

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Q. Do you know of any atrocities or mistreatment of American citizens or prisoners of war at any time?

A. Yes

Q. Will you describe this mistreatment?

A. I arrived at Buchenwald Concentration camp near Weymar, Germany, on 20 August 1944 and on 24 August 1944 the camp was bombed by American bombers. The Germans were manufacturing munitions in the camp and using civilian political prisoners as labor. The bombs from the American Fortresses damaged the buildings housing the munitions factory and some of the bombs landed within a hundred yards of the open Lager where many American prisoners were interned. Some of the prisoners that were in these buildings at the time of the bombing were killed and other prisoners, including Americans, were required to remove the bodies of the victims and to fight fires started by the bombs. Prisoners from our Lager were required to help in this instance.

Q. Can you identify any of the persons responsible for this incident?

A. Yes. The German guard ~~in~~ charge of our Lager was a Wehrmacht private by the name of Hoffman. He was about 30 years of age, short, heavy set and stocky, about 5 feet 8 inches in height and weighing about 180 pounds, with dark hair and average complexion. He was a man with a mean and arrogant disposition. The assistant Lagerfueher was a German political prisoner who had been in the camp for 11 years. His name was Bach or Bock and can be identified as he was a tall, middle aged man who had an injured foot. The foot was amputated across the middle of the arch and he wore but half a shoe and walked with a slight limp.

Q. Can you identify any of the victims of this incident?

A. No, I do not know the names of any of them.

James Frederick Zeiser, Sgt.

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