

**Warning:
Contains Graphic Images**



3253rd Signal Service Company (Radio Intelligence)

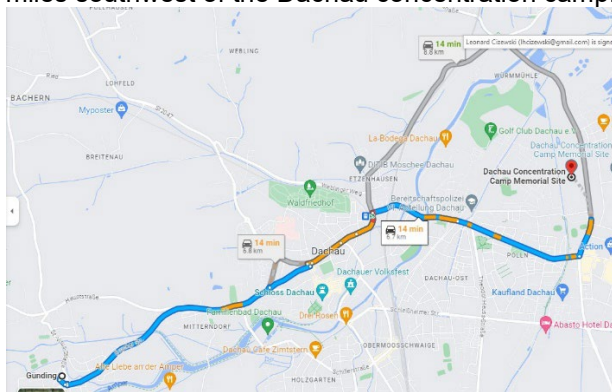


Shoulder Patches LEFT to RIGHT: XVth Corps, Third Army, First Army, Seventh Army

Dachau Photos

Dachau was liberated on April 29, 1945 by the 45th and 42nd Infantry Divisions and 20th Armored Division.

From April 30 to May 2, 1945, the 3253rd bivouacked at Günding, Germany, approximately 7 kilometers/4 miles southwest of the Dachau concentration camp.



[Technician Fourth Grade George L. Sanford](#), 3253rd, reports:

Our billets at Guending are very near the very infamous Dachau concentration camp. Its reputation as a death camp is widely known. It's the so-called Jews that have been mainly exterminated here, and the huge total is not really known at this time.

From the fairly cozy rooms of our billets, or from the working quarters of our HQs, it's hard to realize that we're near such a place. Yet some of their staff that ran the death house may have been stationed in these very rooms. There's some physical evidence of their expressed feelings, shown by some of their personal articles left behind in their hasty exit. One such item that I find on a shelf is a picture book showing some of the early Nazi conquests. It shows many of the leaders and men of their war machine, in the countries that they had invaded at that time. There isn't time for me to fully study or look at the book, but I put it in with some of my belongings to look at later.

Some of our fellows desire a closer look at the concentration camp. They arrive back later in the evening with their first hand grizzly observations. There are findings of lampshades made from human skins. This is the workings of the master race.

The following three photos are from one or more of the soldiers T4 Sandford reports having visited Dachau.

Dachau was not primarily for Jews. It was a concentration for political and other prisoners and for processing prisoners for the Dachau satellite slave labor subcamps. At the time of liberation, only 8% of the 32,000 liberated inmates were Jewish.

From 1933 until liberation at least 200,000 prisoners were processed through Dachau.

The total of deaths at Dachau has never been determined.

Dachau was not an extermination or death camp. 45,855 executions occurred. 29,138 of these were of Jews transferred from other concentration camps. 16,717 were Germans from other countries. Members of resistance organizations and others were also executed.

In addition tens of thousands died of disease, medical neglect, starvation, exposure, and mistreatment.

Train Cars with Deceased Buchenwald Inmates



Soldiers entered Dachau through the railroad gate of the adjoining SS facility. They first encountered 30 to 54 railroad cars with 2,310 deceased Buchenwald inmates.

On April 19, 1945, the SS had loaded approximately 4,000 inmates at the Buchenwald concentration camp for train for transport to Dachau. Roughly 800 bodies of those who died or were murdered enroute, were removed prior to the train's arrival at Dachau. An additional 2,400 died as the train continued toward the camp. Only about 800 were still alive when the train arrived at Dachau on April 27, 1945, 2 days before liberation.

Some veterans of other units said the smell stayed with them the rest of their lives.



Deceased Inmates in the Prison Yard



From the rail yard in the SS facility, soldiers of the 3253rd would have proceeded to the prison compound, In the prison yard near the crematoria were stacks of bodies.

By February, 1945, the crematoria in camps and subcamps had ceased operation due to lack of coal fuel, caused by the Allied aerial bombing campaign and the incidental disintegration of the Nazi regime. By the time of liberation, the SS guards were unable to force starved and exhausted Dachau inmates to haul by horse cart their deceased comrades to the mass gravesite, 2 miles away in Leitenberg.

All items not in the public domain © 2023

[The Unofficial Archive of the U.S. Army Signal Corps in WWII](#)

From the collection of

[The Unofficial Archive of the U.S. Army Signal Corps in WWII](#)

The soldier or soldiers of the 3253rd who took the photos are unidentified.

Photos researched by Ed Wiessing, 303rd Military Intelligence Battalion, 1993-1995. The 303rd is the successor unit of the 3253rd.

Photo captions adapted from the [The 20th Armored Division and the Liberation of Dachau](#) by Leonard H. Cizewski and Rich Mintz.

The statistic of over 200,000 inmates process through Dachau is from [Dachau](#) from the U.S. Holocaust Museum and Memorial Holocaust Encyclopedia.

Page constructed by Leonard H. Cizewski

June 15, 2023