

What the **Liberators** Saw and Remembered

Wobbelin Concentration Camp survivors illustration.



“We were prepared for everything, immune to shock, inured to horror. . . [but] these experiences didn’t prepare us for what we found at Wobbelin . . .”

T. Moffatt Burriss, Anderson, SC native
Platoon Leader, 82nd Airborne Div.
On Wobbelin, camp in Germany, 1945



After fighting in several major battles, including Sicily and Italy (1943), the Netherlands (September 1944), and the Battle of the Bulge (December-January 1944-45), Captain Burriss had witnessed more death and destruction than many during World War II. Yet, as he approached a concentration camp outside Wobbelin in April 1945, he became just as horrified by what he had seen in war.

Wobbelin Concentration Camp survivors illustration.



Wobbelin’s guards had abandoned the camp before Burriss and his men arrived. What was left were hundreds of dead and dying prisoners, some of whom had been imprisoned for years. Cheered at their presence, the prisoners wanted to reach out and touch their liberators, but most were too weak to move. Burriss provided the survivors with what food and clothing he had, before putting the survivors on trucks to take them to the nearest hospital. Many would not survive. He remarked later, “I had never seen human beings look so tortured and grotesque. . . too weak to walk or talk.”



Sketch of entrance gate to Dachau Concentration Camp. Words ironically translate: “Work will set you free.”

“If you dwelled on it, it would be very depressing.”

Horace Berry, Greer, SC native
3rd Army, On Dachau Camp
April-May 1945

After graduating from Clemson in 1941, Horace Berry entered the service like most young men of the day. He eventually joined General Patton’s 3rd Army group that spearheaded the attack from Normandy to the French-German border during summer, 1944. He later took part in the Battle of the Bulge and the invasion of Germany that followed. As Berry’s unit neared the southern city of Munich, they encountered Dachau Concentration Camp. He and all of his comrades were shocked by what they discovered.

The brutal reminders of the Nazi policies were everywhere; gas chambers, ovens, and hundreds of dead and dying prisoners. Even the survivors that Berry found were so starved that when he gave them candy, some died from cramping. Others were so desperate for nourishment that they sometimes ate cigarettes whole.

Illustration of Dachau Concentration Camp survivors.

