



A photo of Gerda's father, **Julius Weissman**, which Gerda kept in her ski boot during her years in Nazi slave-labor camps. Julius Weissmann helped save Gerda's life by insisting that she wear ski boots when the Nazis took her away; she wore the ski boots during a forced death march in which other young women were barefoot or wearing only sandals in the snow.

PHOTO TAKEN CIRCA 1937



A photo of Gerda's mother, **Helene Weissmann**, which Gerda kept in her ski boot during her years in Nazi slave-labor camps.

PHOTO TAKEN CIRCA 1939



A photo of Gerda's brother, **Artur Weissman**, which Gerda kept in her ski boot during her years in Nazi slave-labor camps. Artur was the first in Gerda's immediate family to be taken away by the Nazis.

PHOTO TAKEN CIRCA 1937



Meiner. Gerda

mit vollem Herzen

Kurt

14. September 1945

A photo of American
Soldier Kurt Klein,
given to Gerda. The
message, translated
from German: "To my
Gerda, with a full heart.
Kurt."

DATED SEPT. 14, 1945



A photo of Gerda's **Uncle Leo**, taken shortly before he moved to Turkey. Sixty-seven of Gerda's relatives, including all of her immediate family, dies in the Holocaust. Only Gerda and Uncle Leo survived.

PHOTO TAKEN 1924-1925



A Nazi identification photograph of **Gerda Weissman**, age 16. Gerda's mother had sewn this dress from a green blanket, adding a collar from one of her own dresses.

PHOTO TAKEN CIRCA 1940



A photo of Gerda and her brother, **Artur Weissmann**.

PHOTO TAKEN CIRCA 1936



A school photo of **Gerda**, whose face is circled, second row, fifth from left.

PHOTO TAKEN CIRCA 1932

Gerda was held in several slave-labor camps, including this one, where she worked the looms in a factory setting. She and others lived in the building on the left; newly arriving prisoners were housed in the building on the right.

MODERN PHOTOS





The **Weissmann** family home in Bielsko, Poland. When the German army invaded Poland, the Weissmanns were forced to live in their own basement.

PHOTO TAKEN CIRCA 1990



A photo of Gerda's childhood friend, Isle Kleinzahler, holding her father's hand on a street in Bielsko, Poland. Isle and Gerda spent years together in Nazi slave-labor camps.

PHOTO TAKEN CIRCA 1929

MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF GERMANY

TEMPORARY REGISTRATION

Zeitweilige Registrierungskarte

Name Weissmann Gerda Alter 21 Geschlecht weiblich
Name Age Sex
Ständige Adresse München Säbenerplatz 10 Beruf Büroangestellte
Permanent Address Occupation
Jetzige Adresse München, 9 Säbenerplatz 10
Present Address

Der Inhaber dieser Karte ist als Einwohner von der Stadt München
vorschriftsmässig registriert und ist es ihm oder ihr strengstens verboten, sich von diesem Platz zu
entfernen. Zuwiderhandlung dieser Massnahme führt zu sofortigem Arrest. Der Inhaber dieses Scheines
muss diesen Ausweis stets bei sich führen.

The holder of this card is duly registered as a resident of the town of Munich
and is prohibited from leaving the place designated. Violation of this restriction will
lead to immediate arrest. Registrant will at all times have this paper on his person.

Pass Nr. 373
Legitimations Number
Identity Card Number

Gerda Weissmann
Unterschrift des Inhabers
Signature of Holder



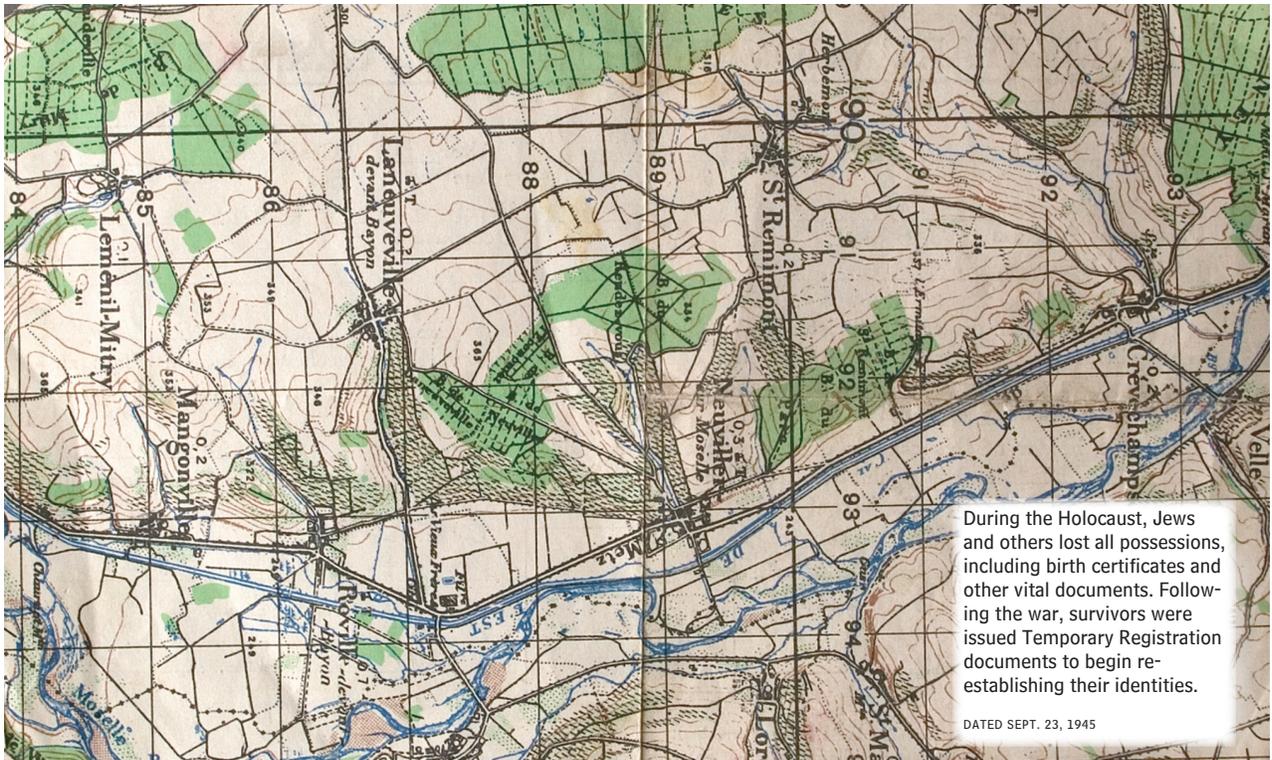
Major A.C.
Chief, Public Safety

Name and Rank
Mil Gov Officer, U.S. Army

23. Sept. 1945.

Datum der Anstellung
Date of Issue

(Dies ist kein Personal-Ausweis und erlaubt keine Vorrechte).
(This is not an identity document and allows no privileges).



SECRET

FROM: OSG 008 May 1945
TO: OSG 008 May 1945
HQ 5TH US INF DIV
BISCHOFFBERG, Q391459
7 May 1945

* AUTH: CG 5th US Inf Div *
* 7 May 1945 *
* Initials D. W. J. AWH *

G-2 PERIODIC REPORT

No 248.

Maps. GERMANY 1/100,000, Shts W8 and W8.

1. ENEMY SITUATION AT END OF PERIOD.

- a. Enemy front lines. No contiguous front line exists.
- b. Defensive organization. None reported.
- c. Units in contact. Elmts of 2 SS Pz Div have been identified on XII Corps flank.

d. General situation on Western Front.

Only active en units are now elmts in German Army Gp Center under command of General Feld Marschall SCHOERNER. The Eastern Front is the scene of most activity where the en are resisting Russian advances vigorously. Army Gp Center is composed of 1st Pz, 4th Pz, 17th and 6th SS Pz Army.

All German forces in NW Germany, Holland and Denmark surrendered as of 050800B May 1945.

Surrender of entire German Armed Forces is imminent.

2. ENEMY OPERATIONS DURING PERIOD.

a. General summary. En resistance was light, scattered and disorganized. Arty reported in our zone for the first time during this operation. VOLARY, Q5053, was occupied at 1900 hrs after token resistance principally arty and 75 PWs with 582 en patients in hospitals being captured by the 2d Inf. Negotiations between 2 Cav Gp and est 2,000 Arty OCS students in vic KASPERSKI-HORY, Q2477, were being considered at end of period.

b. Operations of component elmts.

(1) Infantry. Fire was received from VOLARY during afternoon 6 May. En gp fired from vic Q530550 during morning apologized for violating "NO FIRE" orders agreed upon. Large column of en were reported moving S to VOLARY with white flags at 1515 hrs.

(2) Arty. 12 to 20 rounds of 88mm arty fell in vic VOLARY from 1800 to 1900 hrs.

(3) Air. En ft, liaison type, was fired on vic Q505665 at 1700 hrs and reported damaged.

3. MISCELLANEOUS.

a. PWs processed by PM during period: 677. PWs processed through Clearing Station: 5. PWs captured in hospitals at VOLARY: 582. PWs for present operation: 4,897. Total PWs to date: 63,804.

b. Estimate of en killed, wounded and materiel captured or destroyed.

(1) En killed: 10. En wounded: 40.

(2) En materiel captured or destroyed: Unknown.

c. Third US Army Discussion, May 5.

The surrender of 11 Pz Div to the 90th US Inf Div is the capitulation in the imminent CZECHOSLOVAKIAN Pocket that will be juncture of the Third US Army and Russian forces. With the tactic

Lt. Kurt Klein, an intelligence officer, had access to "secret" documents such as this, written at the end of World War II, at the same time Klein and others arrived to liberate Gerda and other survivors of the death march.

- 1 -

SECRET

DATED MAY 7, 1945, THE SAME DAY
KURT AND GERDA FIRST MET

S E C R E T

situation becoming daily increasingly untenable for the estimated 140,000 enemy combat troops in the pocket, it would appear logical that they too would shortly follow the example of 11 Pz Div and their fellows in Northern GERMANY. However, there is no assurance of this and until they have capitulated, advancing units must be constantly on guard against local surprises and offensive action. Until the enemy has turned in his arms, our troops cannot afford to take any chances at any time. The enemy lacks the capability for large-scale offensive action; all he is capable of is to defer and delay. But, locally, he definitely possesses the capability of inflicting losses and this must be constantly kept in mind by all front line units.

On the basis of identifications in contact, all but a small portion of the estimated 140,000 enemy troops in the CZECHOSLOVAKIAN Pocket are committed against the Russians in the Eastern portion of the pocket. However, with short interior lines of communication and favorable terrain, the enemy has the capability of shifting part of his armor into our immediate zone of advance. There are indications that this has been done to some extent, and if the enemy proposes to fight to the last in the pocket it can be expected that he will build up against us in the next several days.

The enemy command situation in the pocket is obscure. There is no definite information as to just who is in control. A large portion of the mobile troops in the pocket are SS, a factor that may make considerable difference on the question of capitulation. According to the statement of an officer PW, 4 May, Field Marshal SCHOENNER last identified as CG of Army Group "A", had declared (for the record at least) that he proposed to fight to the end in the CZECHOSLOVAKIAN Pocket. This information is unconfirmed from any other source. However, SCHOENNER has a militant Nazi background and it is possible that he may attempt to stage a Wagnerian finale.

The import of all this is that the war is still continuing very actively in the CZECHOSLOVAKIAN Pocket and all Third US Army units must keep this fact constantly uppermost in mind. The enemy is cornered and at bay, but he still has guns and ammunition and he still can kill and destroy. A Nazi is just as dangerous a beast when cornered as when on the offensive. It must always be remembered that there is only one kind of a good Nazi--a dead one, or disarmed and securely locked up.

d. A captured Oberlandrat of the Iglau Protectorate stated high German officials ^{was} FRAGEN believe that the Yalta Conference decided Allied forces will occupy the territory each Allied Army conquered. Hence, the reason why the Germans have resisted the Russian advances so stubbornly. This coincides with Admiral Doenitz's statement of resisting the Russian's advance until the very end.

e. PWE. FREYUNG, Q2639.

f. Mission to 5th Rcn Tr. No change.

g. Weather. Generally scattered to broken clouds occasionally becoming overcast with widely scattered showers.

Visibility. 4-6 miles becoming 2-3 miles during early morning haze and fog.

Winds. Westernly light becoming moderate in afternoon.

Temperature. Max - 60s. Min - 40s.

4. ENEMY CAPABILITIES. None.

D. W. Thackeray
D. W. THACKERAY, *AUSA*
Lt Col., GSC,
AC of S, G-2

DISTRIBUTION: Special.

-2-

S E C R E T

Lt. Kurt Klein, an intelligence officer, had access to "secret" documents such as this, written at the end of World War II, at the same time Klein and others arrived to liberate Gerda and other survivors of the death march.

DATED MAY 7, 1945, THE SAME DAY
KURT AND GERDA FIRST MET

Deutsche Wollenwaren Manufaktur
Aktiengesellschaft
Grünberg (Schles.)

Postfach 32.

An den

Herrn Bürgermeister
als Ortspolizeibehörde
(Abt. Baupolizei)

h i e r

Fernruf:

Sammel-Nr. 121

Codes:

A. B. C.
5. und 6. Ausgabe
Rudolf Mosse

Drahtwort:

Wollfaktor
Grünberg Schles.

Zahlstellen:

Reichsbank-Giro-Konto Grünberg Nr. 811/86
Dresdner Bank, Filiale Grünberg
Commerzbank A.-G., Forst/L
Deutsche Bank, Zweigstelle Grünberg
Postscheck-Konto Breslau Nr. 517

direkt durch

Ihr Zeichen

66 Rae./
H.H.

Ihre Nachricht vom

4. 5. 42

Unsere Nachricht vom

Unser Zeichen

in der Antwort anzugeben

Gl/He

Tag

29. 5. 42

Judenbaracke

In Beantwortung Ihres Schreibens vom 4. ds. Mts. teilen wir Ihnen mit, daß Umänderungsarbeiten in unserem Shedbau, Breslauer Straße 33, vorgenommen wurden, zwecks Errichtung des Judenlagers, auf Veranlassung des Sonderbeauftragten des Reichsführers der SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei für fremdvölkischen Arbeitseinsatz in Oberschlesien Sitz Sosnowitz.

Anbei senden wir Ihnen wunschgemäß Zeichnungen, Lageplan und Baubeschreibung in je zweifacher Ausfertigung zur gefl. Benutzung und bitten nachträglich um eine entsprechende Baugenehmigung.

Heil Hitler !

Deutsche Wollenwaren Manufaktur
Aktiengesellschaft

Anlagen !



This paperwork identifies plans to expand the slave-labor camp at Grünberg, where Gerda would be sent.

DATED MAY 29, 1942

Gerda dearest,

The day which dawned so gray for us is now nearly over and I am sitting in the waiting room of the Munich railroad station, meeting your thoughts halfway, while unseen hands are busy setting the wheels in motion that will carry me away from you! What happens after that is not clear.

This is the second time I am leaving Germany, having to leave behind that which is most precious to me. The first time, I did not fully perceive the gathering storm. Meanwhile the terrifying drama has taken its inexorable course. The curtain has come down, but you still remain where the tragedy was played out.

I cannot find any peace until you, too, have become a mere spectator of those events and at least a small part of the compensation that should be yours will have eased the pain. Just know that the nightmare is over and the future lies before us in brighter colors! With that in mind, Gerda: Be of good courage — I have full confidence that both of us will soon be very, very happy.

In high spirits I embrace you and kiss you,

Your Kurt

A letter from American soldier **Kurt** to **Gerda**, his future wife. "Just know that the nightmare is over," he wrote, "and the future lies before us in brighter colors."

DATED SEPT. 16, 1945

My most precious Kurt,

Another day has passed. Now, first and foremost, I must thank you for your letter, which came so unexpectedly and brought me so much joy. Your photo stands in front of me — your flowers are still fragrant. The quiet, measured ticking of the little clock reminds me that each and every minute moves you farther and farther away from me.

For the third time in my life I am experiencing the excruciating pain that all that is dearest to me and to which I clung the most has been taken from me.

Forgive me for not being as brave as I should have been when I said good-bye to you. But I promise, I shall be from now on.

My thoughts of you are the core of my existence. They can conquer all obstacles.

I embrace you with many kisses,

Gerda

A letter from **Gerda** to her “most precious” **Kurt**. “My thoughts of you are the core of my existence,” she wrote. “They can conquer all obstacles.”

DATED SEPT. 18, 1945

Kennzeichen für Schutzhäftlinge in den Konz. Lagern

EXHIBIT "N"

Form und Farbe der Kennzeichen

	Politisch	Berufs- Verbrecher	Emigrant	Bibel- forscher	Homosexuell	Asozial
Grund- farben						
Abzeichen für Rückfällige						
Häftlinge der Straf- kompanie						
Abzeichen für Juden						
Besondere Abzeichen					<p>Beispiel</p> <p> Häftlings- Nummer Rückfälliger Strafkomp. Schutzhaft Asozial </p> <p> RECEIVED DATE: 5-2-54 FILE NO: 272 NEW YORK, N.Y. WOLAC </p>	
	Jüd. Rasse- schänder	Rasse- schänderin	Flucht- verdächtig	Häftlings- Nummer		
	Pole	Tscheche	ehemaliger Wehrmacht angehöriger	Häftling Ia		

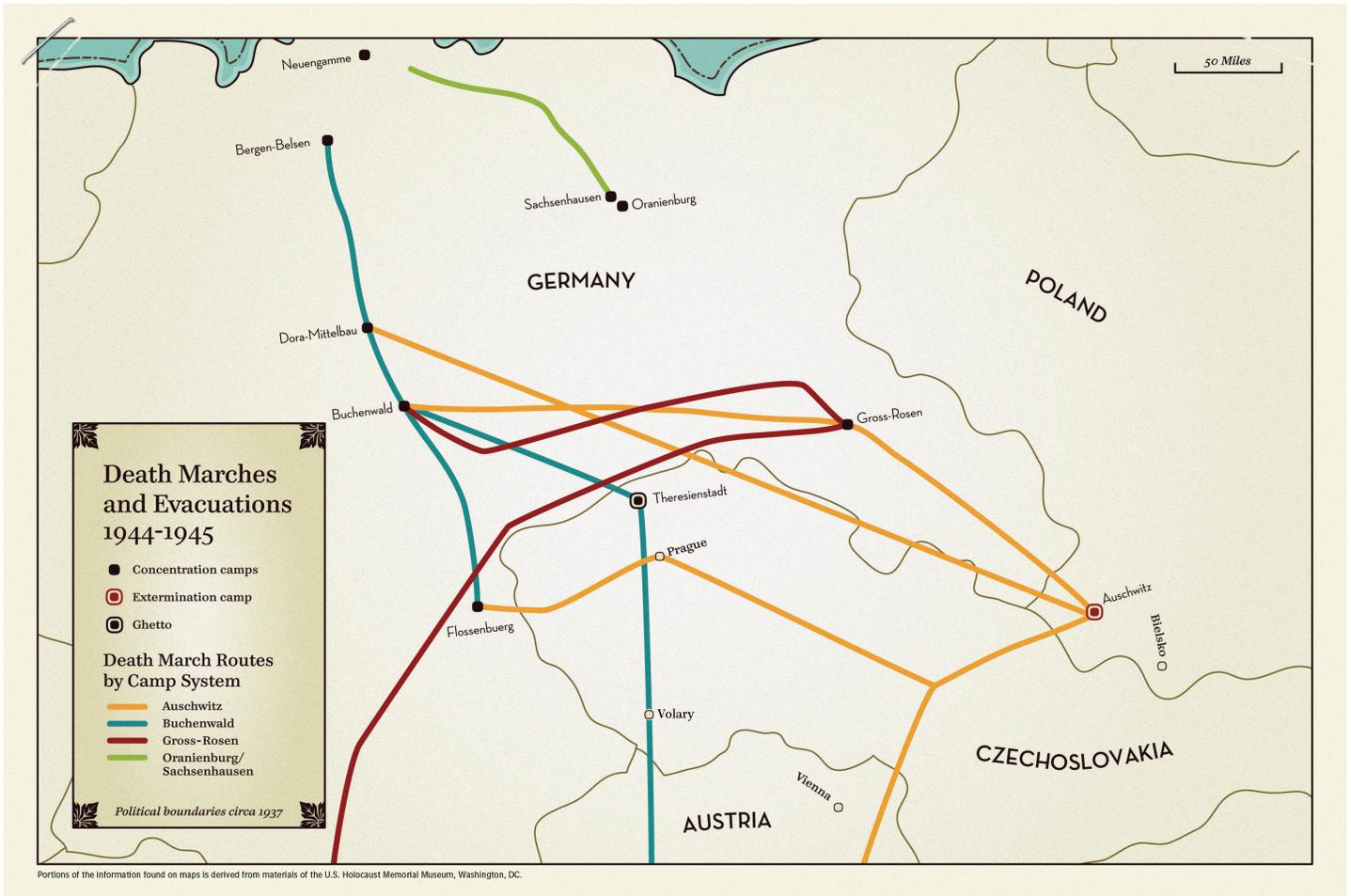
Many minorities — Jews, Roma (Gypsies), homosexuals, political and religious prisoners, and the mentally ill — were “marked” for annihilation by the Nazis. The felt “Jude” star included in this kit is another such symbol.

Badges for Interned Prisoners in the Concentration Camps

Form and Color of Badges

	Political	Habitual Criminal	Immigrant	Bible Researcher	Homosexual	Anti-Social
Basic Colors						
Badges for Second Offenders						
Prisoners of Punishment Companies						
Badges for Jews						
Special Badges	 Jewish Race Desecrator— Male	 Jewish Race Desecrator— Female	 Flight Suspect	 Prisoner Number		
	 Polish	 Czech	 Previous Armed Forces Member	 Special Prisoners Badge		

Many minorities — Jews, Roma (Gypsies), homosexuals, political and religious prisoners, and the mentally ill — were “marked” for annihilation by the Nazis. The felt “Jude” star included in this kit is another such symbol.

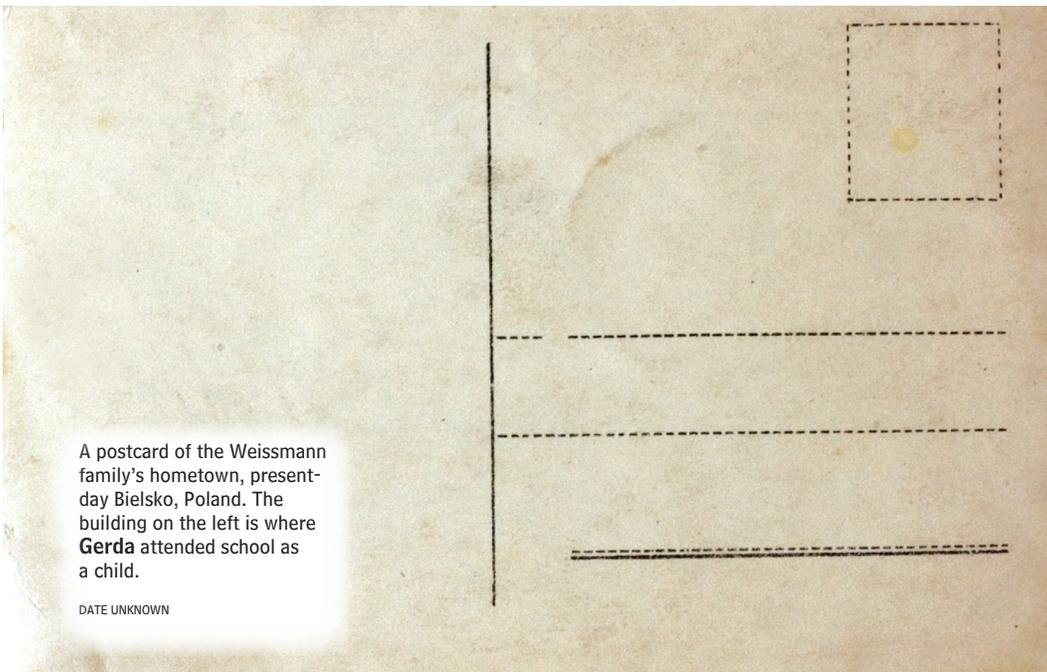
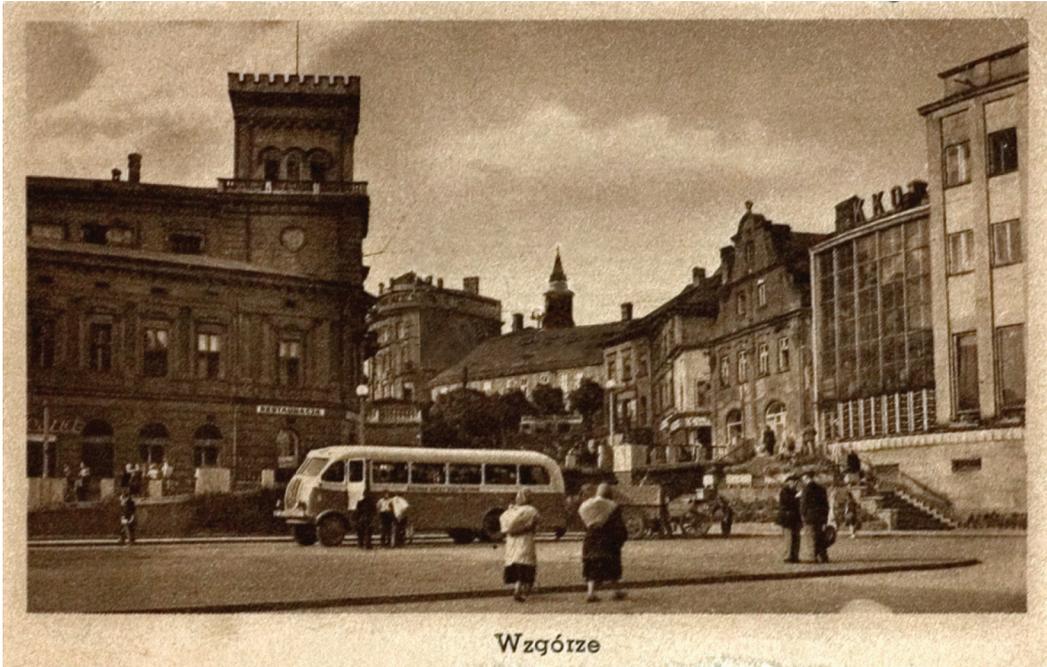


As allied forces encircled Germany in the fall of 1944, the Nazis tried to hide their crimes, dismantling camps and evacuating prisoners on what came to be known as death marches. **Gerda's** march, in the bitter winter of 1945, lasted for 350 miles until she was liberated in Volary.

MAP BOUNDARIES CIRCA 1937



Hundreds of Nazi camps — death camps and slave-labor camps — covered the landscape of German-occupied Europe.



24.5.1940
31.5.1940 10
ISTANBUL
31.5.1940 10

Mein geliebter Onkel Leo!
Deine l. Karte vom 14/1 haben erhalten, und haben
wir uns sehr gefreut über Euer Wohlergehen.
In Vertretung der l. Eltern schreibe ich von Dich.
Die Nerven der l. Mama sind seit einigen Wochen
derart verübelt, daß es Tage gibt, daß der l. Tota
und ich uns keinen Rath geben können.
Ich hätte Dir dies nicht geschrieben, aber Du wirst
Dich gewiss wundern, daß die l. Mama nicht selbst
schreibt, da sie beim besten Willen die Feder nicht
aufgreifen kann. Was machst Du mein l. Onkel
sowohl l. Tante Edith und Jimmynka?
Verbleibt mir alle unendlich innig geküßt von Euerer
Stets an Euch denkender Gerda.

Abfender: Gerda Weissmann
Alexanderefeld bei Bielitz
Wohnort, auch Zustell-, oder Leihpostamt
Kaisersrasse 24.
Straße, Hausnummer, Gebäudeteil, Stockwerk oder Postschloßnummer
Oberschlesien, Deutschland

Postkarte

15 15
BIELITZ IOBERSCHLES
27. 5. Deutsches Reich
a

Herrn
Herrn Leo Mückenbrunn
Istanbul
Posta-Kutusu 530.
Straße, Hausnummer, Gebäudeteil, Stockwerk oder Postschloßnummer
Türkei

Will nicht unterlassen
von mir an Euch alle viele
Küsse an senden Deine Gerda
Meine Lieben!
An Dich l. Leo an die l.
Edithka und Jimmynka
die unerschöpfliche Karte

A postcard to Gerda's Uncle Leo in Turkey. In the postcard, Gerda explains that she is writing to Uncle Leo "because Mama's nerves are in bad shape." Artur, Gerda's brother, had been taken away by the Nazis in October, but the family still hadn't heard a word from or about him.

DATED MAY 27, 1940

Soldiers to Turn Into Students Under I & E Plan

*So here hath been dawning
Another blue day;
Think, will thou let it
Slip unsees away.*

—Thomas Carlyle

Opportunity is knocking for the soldiers who occupy Germany in the form of division education courses designed to teach one or more useful vocational or professional skills or give a basic education leading towards such a skill, according to Major Paul A. Vanderhaiden, division Information and Education officer.

While military duties will still have priority over anything else, an ambitious education program for the division is being organized and is scheduled to start 30 days after the division closes in its assigned occupational area in Germany. All unit plans and the division plan must be completed within 10 days after arrival in the occupation area.

As the plan is tentatively set at the present, the education program can be roughly divided into two phases: unit schools which will be classroom affairs and on-the-job training.

Unit schools will be organized on a battalion level or for small units totalling 1,000 men. Classes will be held with two hours instruction per day, Monday through Friday. The two hours will fall somewhere between 1000 and 1700 hours daily, as they fit into the division training program.

On-the-Job Training

On-the-job training will place an individual on Special Duty as an understudy to a soldier actually performing a job, such as welding, or caterpillar operating. The student would learn by actually performing the work.

Regimental and divisional schools may be organized for courses which have not much universal demand or which require scarce technical equipment.

(continued p. 2 Col 3)

5th Division Gets Third Quota for 85-pointers to U.S.

A third quota of 5th Division personnel to go back to those United States under the point-and-possible discharge system has just been announced. The new quota is the largest yet, comprising 693 enlisted men and 7 officers, who are scheduled to leave the division on June 2.

The plan thus appears to be working as promised and far faster than most Red Diamond veterans expected. When points were frozen in the division were 414 officers and 5,244 in the 5th with 85



BEFORE Schewa Schleps, aged 18, of Danbrowa-Grube, Upper Silesia, was placed in a concentration camp and later forced to march 500 miles, she was the robust, healthy girl pictured above. The photograph was furnished the 5th Division Inspector-general by her sister.



AFTER Schewa Schleps, now 22, was a prisoner of hate for three years and made the 500 mile march to Volary, Czechoslovakia, she was the living skeleton photographed above. But not for long. She died the day after the photograph was taken, from starvation.

—16th Sig Photo

LETTER TO AMERICANS

(The following letter was written by a 21-year-old Jewess named Gerda Weisman who was one of the handful of survivors of an SS conducted death march from eastern Germany to Volary, Czechoslovakia, where 5th Division troops found them. The story that gives the background of this letter is on the right-hand column of the page. This letter is printed here because it is an unusually powerful letter and because it explains partially why we Americans fought this war and why we have to stay here in Germany and occupy it. Gerda Weisman wrote this letter the day after being liberated.)

Peace! Peace! That great word that holds within it the meaning of life, the breath of freedom. Freedom! I welcome it in the rays of the golden sun, and I salute you, brave American soldiers. To us you are not ordinary men, but mythical heroes who fight to liberate us and who meet us with outstretched arms. Your sympathy is great, but we cannot speak the unspeakable and you might not understand our language. You are a people of freedom — and we? Are we human still — or again?

They have tried to drag us to the lowest level of existence, demeaned us, treated us worse than animals. Yet something has remained alive within us, for it stirs anew. It is a soul sensitive to the beauty of blossoming spring. The heart that beats in our breast pulsates with feeling. Slowly the petrified shell under which cruel barbarians have cut deep wounds is breaking, leaving a vulnerable, newly healed heart.

Words of farewell for you were whispered by my friend's dying lips: "Welcome them, welcome our liberators. I won't live to see them so greet them for me, they who liberate you!"

Gerda Weissmann

5th Uncarths Another SS Brutality

In the last days of the war, troops of the 5th Division liberated 150 starved, emaciated young Jewesses from a hell-life of filth and brutality when they captured the Sudetenland village of Volary and uncovered the details of one of the most morbid and senseless examples of bestiality committed by the German army and the German people.

The sordid collection of facts woven into a story of how 150 Jewesses of an original group of 1200 survived a death march of approximately 500 miles began when the 803rd Tank Destroyer Recon platoon attached to the 2nd Combat Team, entered Volary with little opposition. Major Henry N. Hooper of the 2nd's Military Government detachment found the girls lying on the filthy floor of a building, starving to death. They were carefully removed by litter by the 2nd Infantry to a civilian hospital and the 5th Medical Battalion took over the job of supervising their recovery. Many of the girls were so emaciated that the medics were able to carry two girls on a single normal medical litter.

Generous soldiers of the 5th Division, stirred by the pitiful sight, contributed their own clothes and brought gifts. Units sent representative groups of soldiers to see the result of the SS treatment and report it to their fellows. Brown mess sergeants baked cakes and pies and brought them to the hospital. The entire reaction of the American soldiers was in such direct contrast to the brutalities suffered at the hands of the Germans that the Jewesses wept their thanks or stared in wide-eyed wonder at their deliverers.

(continued p. 2 col 3)

Staffs Planning Recreation Eden

Extensive recreation plans involving motor launch trips on the Danube river, use of a castle and chateau for recreation clubs, and use of tennis courts, swimming pools and golf courses are on tap for the 5th Infantry Division when it moves into its occupational area.

In addition, the division is making all efforts at the present to continue sending leave parties to Paris, the Riviera and the United Kingdom. Furloughs to the United States, however, are a thing of the past. The army has discontinued such furloughs because of the need for shipping space and return of troops to the states.

Gerda's "Letter to Americans" was published in a military newspaper shortly after the war had ended. Gerda wrote this just two days after being liberated.



Jews were forced to wear yellow "Jude" stars — German for "Jew" — marking and dehumanizing them. In the Netherlands and France, these stars were labeled "Jood" and "Juif."