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PROCEEDINGS

of a

MILITARY COURT FOR THE  
TRIAL OF WAR CRIMINALS

held at

LUNEBURG, GERMANY,

on

SATURDAY, 20 OCTOBER, 1945,

upon the trial of

JOSEF KRAMER

and

44 Others.

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THIRTIETH DAY.

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Transcript of the Official  
Shorthand Notes.

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(At 0930 hours the Court reassembles pursuant to adjournment, the same President, Members and Judge Advocate being present.)

(The accused are again brought before the Court.)

CAPT. ROBERTS: I have finished with Flrazich but there are two points I want to mention at this stage. The first is that as part of Flrazich's defence I want to put in an affidavit but a certain difficulty has arisen in connection with it and that is that the original of the affidavit is in the hands of Col. Genn who at the moment, I understand, is in Paris. I did manage to borrow it from him for a short while and I had made for the convenience of the Court copies of the two paragraphs from it which I wish to read to the Court.

The matter arose in this way; when I was handed the papers originally in this case I was also given a little piece of paper on which was an extract from the affidavit relating to Flrazich, and I think Col. Backhouse says if any of the affidavit goes in the whole goes in. I am only interested in one or two paragraphs, the first one dealing with who the man is who made the affidavit and the second one relating to Flrazich. What I suggest, if the Court agree, is that I read this part of the affidavit now relating to Flrazich's defence and put in a copy of that now as an exhibit and later when Col. Genn comes back put in the original.

THE JUDGE ADVOCATE: If Col. Backhouse agrees what is in the original I think we can accept it.

COL. BACKHOUSE: I have told my friend I have not the slightest objection to it subject to the fact that when I see the original the rest can go in. Frankly I have no idea what is in it. I accept that it relates to Flrazich and I do not object to that going in, subject to what I have already said that there will be no objection to me putting in the whole of the affidavit at a later stage.

THE PRESIDENT: You can put in a certified true copy of this affidavit and when Col. Genn comes back we can have the original in?

COL. BACKHOUSE: Yes.

CAPT. ROBERTS: If it will be convenient I will certify it myself and hand it in at a later stage this morning.

THE PRESIDENT: Very well.

CAPT. ROBERTS: The extract from the affidavit reads: "In the matter of War Crimes and Atrocities at Belsen. Deposition of Raymond Dujeu, late of Paris, sworn before me, Major Geoffrey Smallwood, Major (Legal Staff), an officer of the Staff of the Judge Advocate General to the Forces.

"1. I am 22 years of age. I was sent for forced labour in 1942. I was arrested in April, 1942, for returning to France without permission. On 1st May, 1942, I came to Belsen. At that time they were all prisoners of war except 200 Russians in the Camp. I have worked in the kitchen all the time I have been at Belsen.

"9. I also know an S.S. man called Karl Flrazich (photo 1-5). He was an exception to the ordinary guards and was always kind and never beat anyone.

"Sworn by the above named Raymond Dujeu this 8th day of May, 1945, at Belsen Camp (Signed) Dujeu Raymond, before me the said Major Geoffrey Smallwood". Then follows the usual certificate by the interpreter.

(Deposition of Raymond Dujeu is marked Exhibit 137, signed by the President and attached to the proceedings.)

CAPT. ROBERTS: The other matter which I would like to bring to the attention of the Court at this moment is that I now want on behalf of the accused Flrazich to put further questions to Brigadier Glyn Hughes. They relate to points which I think were not apparent to anybody at the time when Brigadier Glyn Hughes gave his evidence and I do think that they may very well be material to Flrazich's defence. The only difficulty is that Brigadier Glyn Hughes at the moment is engaged on a tour of Rhine Army and is very reluctant to come here specially for that purpose. I have agreed with the prosecutor, subject to the Court's approval, to go and see Brigadier Glyn Hughes myself and take an affidavit from him dealing with the questions which I wish to put, if that course would be convenient and acceptable to the Court.

COL. BACKHOUSE: There again I told my friend that my attitude is very much the same as on the other matter, that if necessary I can re-examine Brigadier Glyn Hughes. Subject to anything of that kind I will agree to anything which will help the Court.

CAPT. ROBERTS: What I have arranged to do is to show the affidavit to the prosecutor before I hand it in and he can have the opportunity of obtaining a counter-affidavit.

COL. BACKHOUSE: If it is something which I take exception to I will ask him to come here.

THE JUDGE ADVOCATE: It would be more satisfactory to have him here.

COL. BACKHOUSE: I think we are both agreed it is a convenient course. My friend does not, of course, know yet what Brigadier Glyn Hughes's answers will be. It may be he will not want to put it in or bring him here and I think the far more convenient thing is to go and see Brigadier Glyn Hughes and obtain an affidavit. If it is something I am prepared to accept there will be no need to bring him back, but if it is something controversial then I am afraid will have to have him.

THE JUDGE ADVOCATE: If Capt. Roberts gets the affidavit and considers it and then applies again to the Court that will be the best thing.

CAPT. BROWN: I represent the accused No. 17, Gura; No. 18 Mathes; No. 19 Calsson and No. 21, Egersdorf. The accused Gura is accused on both charges and the other three are accused only on the Belsen charge. I have no witnesses to call on behalf of Gura and I propose to put him straight into the witness box and let him give his evidence.

Before I do so I would like to explain to the Court that Gura is a Czechoslovakian and although he can speak and understand German reasonably well, at times he gets into slight difficulty. I have spoken to the Court interpreter and arranged that if any such difficulty arises while he is giving evidence the Court interpreter will manage to overcome the difficulty by possibly using a little Hungarian which the accused also understands. I think that will be quite satisfactory to the Court.

THE ACCUSED, LADISLAW GURA, takes his stand at the place from which the other witnesses have given their evidence and, having been duly sworn, is examined by CAPT. BROWN as follows:-

Q What is your full name? A. Ladislav Gura.

Q You are a Czechoslovakian? A. Yes.

Q Where and when were you born? A. On the 27th June, 1918, in Bratislava, Presburg.

Q You are married and you have one child? A. Yes.

Q When did you join the S.S.? A. On the 15th April, 1943.



Q Did you volunteer to join the S.S.? A. No.

Q Where did you go then? A. From Presburg to Vienna and then to Auschwitz.

Q When did you arrive at Auschwitz? A. 16th April, 1943.

THE JUDGE ADVOCATE: I thought he only joined the S.S. on the 15th April. Have we got the dates right?

THE INTERPRETER: Yes; on the 15th April he joined and left Presburg for Vienna; on the 16th April he arrived in Auschwitz.

THE PRESIDENT: Via Vienna?

THE INTERPRETER: Yes.

CAPT. BROWN: (To the witness): How were you employed when you got to Auschwitz?

A For three or four weeks I was trained, then the commandant of the camp, Hartenstein took 19 of us who were drivers for motor transport work.

Q During the whole of the remainder of 1943 were you employed as a driver? A. Yes.

Q Were you ever a blockfuhrer in Auschwitz? A. No.

Q When did you leave Auschwitz? A. I left Auschwitz on the 21st January, 1945, in the morning at 0500 hours.

Q During the period you were at Auschwitz were you ever on guard? A. Yes.

Q Will you tell the Court when and where you were on guard? A. During the summer of 1943 the whole M.T. personnel and also the clerks had to do guard duties as a punishment on Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon, on guard from the huts round the perimeter.

Q Did that just happen on one day? A. In 1943 it happened only once; in 1944, however, in April and May I was thrown out from my M.T. work and put on guard duties for approximately eight weeks; it was April and May, 1944.

Q What did you do during the remainder of the time you were at Auschwitz?

A I was working as a driver for food transport, bakery and meat transport, and so on; always as a driver.

Q You have seen the deposition of Bialek on page 4 of the bundle? A. Yes.

Q Look at paragraph 2. What have you got to say about the incidents referring to you in that paragraph? A. First I have never been in 1943 a blockfuhrer; second I never came, with the exception of the above-mentioned Sunday, to Berkenu on guard duties.

Q Have you ever hit anybody over the head and face with the butt of a rifle?

A I had my rifle only for the period of three or four weeks, then I had to return my rifle and I never had a rifle any more.

Q You have told us that you left Auschwitz on the 21st January, 1945. Under what circumstances did you leave Auschwitz? A. I was put under arrest on the 19th June, 1944, and I remained under arrest until the 12th April, 1945. When I left Auschwitz on the 21st January, 1945, I went with 18 other prisoners who were also under arrest, and we were accompanied by four guards and a man from the political department. We went all on bicycles towards Hertzburg.

Q Did you then go to Belsen? A. Yes, on the 17th February, 1945, at about 2230 hours I arrived at Belsen.

Q Did you remain under arrest all the time you were at Belsen? A. During the month of March I was released for one week only and then I was put under arrest again.

- Q Why were you put under arrest again? A. I had a compatriot of mine in the women's compound - from the same town - and I tried to send a letter to her through another prisoner but I was seen by a guard from the watch-tower and that is why I was arrested again.
- Q What was the name of that prisoner to whom you were trying to pass the letter?  
A Hilde Löffler.
- Q When did you leave Belsen? A. On the 12th April, 1945, in the afternoon at 1630 hours.
- Q Were you still under arrest then? A. Yes, under guard.
- Q Were you taken away under guard? A. Yes.
- Q Where were you taken to? A. We had to go in the direction of Neuene Gamme, but at about 2030 hours I escaped; I got away.
- Q Were you later captured by the British? A. About ten kilometres from Bergen-Belsen I stood waiting the arrival of the British troops.
- Q Did they arrest you? A. Yes.
- Q I am now going to refer to the deposition of Karl Dolinski on page 20. What have you got to say about the accusations in that deposition? A. I can only say that during the month of March I was released only for the week and in this week I was doing duty only three times and on the third time I was arrested and I never did guard duties accompanying prisoners, only guard duties on the watch-towers.
- Q I am now going to refer to the evidence of Sompolinski in Volume 13 of the transcript. His evidence starts on page 9 but the incidents I am going to refer to are on page 11. You remember the witness Sompolinski who gave evidence in Court? A. Yes.
- Q He accused you of killing a large number of prisoners during three days before the British arrived while you were in charge of a kommando dragging bodies to the grave. A. I can only say that the witness in his affidavit said that I killed 25 per day and then in the Court he said I killed 25 in one hour. Apart from that, during that period I was detained, I was under arrest, and I certainly could not do such a thing.
- Q Was his story about you completely untrue? A. Yes.
- Q Have you ever beaten people with your rifle and kicked them? A. No.

MAJOR WINWOOD: No questions.

MAJOR MUNRO: No questions.

MAJOR CRANFIELD: No questions.

Cross-examined by CAPT. ROBERTS.

- Q You say you were under arrest at Belsen for a certain period. By under arrest do you mean under open arrest or in prison? A. In prison.
- Q Would No. 16 stand up. (The accused Flrazich stands up). Do you know this man? A. Yes.
- Q Was he ever in prison with you at Belsen? A. Yes.
- Q Was he in the same cell? A. No; I was in cell No. 8 and he in cell No. 9
- Q Was No. 8 alongside No. 9? A. Yes.



Q Can you remember about the date when he came into the prison there? A. I do not know when he came into prison but I think I remember that two or three days before we left Belsen; I left on the 12th April; two or three days before he had been released.

CAPT. FIELDEN: No questions.

CAPT. CORBALLY: No questions.

CAPT. MEAVE: No questions.

CAPT. PHILLIPS: No questions.

LT. BOYD: No questions.

CAPT. MUNRO: No questions.

LT. JEDRZEJCOWICZ: No questions.

Cross-examined by COL. BACKHOUSE.

Q You mean you left Belsen on the 12th, do you? A. Yes.

Q And Flrazich had been released two or three days beforehand? A. Yes.

Q If he says he was not released until the 12th that would be wrong? A. No, that is wrong.

Q What prison were you in? A. In the area of the Wehrmacht barracks, in the S.S. area, there was a stone building converted to a prison, detention barracks.

CAPT. BROWN: I do not think that is right.

THE PRESIDENT: The Court is not quite clear. Actually the interpreter said: "In the area of the Wehrmacht barracks".

THE INTERPRETER: I made a mistake.

COL. BACKHOUSE: (To the witness): You mean in the administrative part of the S.S.? A. Not inside the concentration camp but the administrative part.

Q This girl, Hilde Löffler, do you know her quite well? A. Yes.

Q Have you known her for a long time? A. Yes, when we were children I knew her then already.

Q Did you see her at Auschwitz at all? A. Yes.

Q And you saw her again in Belsen? A. Yes.

Q Is she a decent type of girl? A. Yes, very good.

Q She came from Presburg too? A. Yes.

Q You told us that you were called up for the S.S. You are a really a Slovak, are not you? A. Yes.

Q Did you represent yourself as being Volksdeutsch? A. No.

Q It is a bit strange that you were called up for the S.S. when they were being called up? A. I made enquiries why I, a Slovak, was conscripted so they in the office showed me a paper that I had been released from the Slovak army, and amongst the 18 or 19 other people there were several other Slovaks and also some Volksdeutsch.

- Q I am suggesting to you that you were a volunteer? A. First I had been in the army for four years so I had enough of it; second I had a very good position, I was a civil servant at home; and, third, the goods in my home were not rationed so why should I volunteer to go to Germany?
- Q What was your pay in the Slovakian army? A. Per day one Czech crown and 50 heller (one and a half crowns) during peace time, and during war time two crowns and 50 heller, 25 pfennigs, 10d.
- Q What was your pay in the S.S.? A. Per day one mark and later one mark and 20 pfennigs.
- Q You were released from the Slovak army to go into the S.S., were not you?  
A Yes.
- Q Double the pay to begin with and then three times the pay? A. Yes, that is true, but I could buy more for my two crowns and 50 heller in Czechoslovakia, than for ten marks in Germany.
- Q You were not stationed in Germany, were you; you were stationed in Poland?  
A Yes.
- Q Had you been to Germany before? A. In 1940 I was transferred for six weeks for some sort of manoeuvres for anti-aircraft because we had German N.C.O's during the period of six months, that is part of the Slovak army I was serving in, and we went down to Vienna, or in the vicinity of Vienna, and manoeuvred there for six weeks.
- Q Do you remember the woman Regina Bialek? A. I do not know that woman.
- Q Do you say you were never a blockfuhrer at all? A. I was no blockfuhrer.
- Q And never on guard inside the camp at Auschwitz? A. Never.
- Q How do you think she knew you were a Slovak then? A. They knew it because as a driver I came sometimes inside the compound and if they were Slovaks I spoke in the Slovak language a little or Hungarian; as a matter of fact I did not speak very much German then.
- Q What did you do during that first month that you were there? A. For three weeks or three and a half weeks we were trained.
- Q What did your training consist of? A. All sorts of infantry drill, foot drill and rifle drill.
- Q Did you do no guard duties during that time? A. No, I returned my rifle and after four weeks I was put on motor transport work.
- Q When you went on guard in the watch-towers did you carry your rifle then?  
A Yes, I borrowed them from the company office.
- Q When you were for eight weeks on guard duties did you have a rifle then?  
A Yes, I was issued with a rifle then.



- Q. Was it forbidden for men to speak to women prisoners at Auschwitz? A. Yes, it was forbidden, but I did not care about that.
- Q. Did you take exception to prisoners doing it? A. As far as I was concerned I did not care about that.
- Q. Did you go in and out of the compound quite often? A. Yes, in every compound.
- Q. How were the prisoners treated there? A. In the women's compound they were very well treated, I know that, and also in the gypsy compound - very well - they had butter, white bread and cheese, just like we.
- Q. What about the men's compound. Why have you left that out? A. The men's compound was also quite good; food was sufficient in Auschwitz everywhere.
- Q. Did you ever see anybody beaten in Auschwitz? A. I have seen that, yes.
- Q. Often? A. Not very often, but I have seen it.
- Q. Who did the beating? A. I saw blockaltester beat women, and I have seen S.S. also beating women.
- Q. You just did nothing about that? A. When I have seen that one prisoner beat the other then I went immediately and separated them.
- Q. When was that? A. In Winter 1943/1944.
- Q. What were you doing there? A. I was driving trucks with coal for the hospitals and for the kitchens and for the blocks; for the whole compound.
- Q. That was when you just happened to be in a compound you saw that, was it? A. Yes.
- Q. You went across and interfered. What did you do? A. I started shouting at them and that was sufficient, because if an S.S. man shouted at the prisoners that was enough.
- Q. If an S.S. man shouted the prisoners immediately stopped whatever they were doing, did they? A. Yes, yes, yes.
- Q. Whilst you were driving round if you saw something wrong you interfered, did you? A. No, I stopped immediately and I saw what happened.
- Q. Let me suggest to you that in 1943 you saw a man speaking to a woman and you stopped on that occasion. A. When I saw a woman prisoner speaking with a man prisoner I never bothered about it, because I thought: "After all, may be she is his wife or his daughter, and he is just such a human being as I am. May be they have the opportunity to speak once a year together, so why should I interfere."
- Q. What would have happened to you if you were on guard if you had been seen allowing it? A. Well, I can see it, but I do not need to see it.
- Q. What would have happened to you if you had been caught when you were on guard allowing it? A. Well, it depended who was the man who saw me. If he belonged to the same company as I that was all right, he would not have reported me, and if he belonged to some other company, well, then he might have reported to me. But what can they do? They can arrest me and put me into the bunker, and anyway in the bunker it was better than outside.
- Q. You told us you were only guarding outside the perimeter, but did not you have to guard in between the various lagers as well? A. No, the whole large perimeter or at night time the smaller perimeter.
- Q. Was not it just through the perimeter wires that the men used to try and talk to the women? A. That was not very well possible, because there was quarantine between and also the mixed compound consisting of families, so I do not think they could do that at all.

- Q. Men prisoners could not get into the women's lager, could they? A. Oh yes, they could do it, but accompanied by a guard.
- Q. I suggest to you that on the occasion that I was speaking of, when you saw a man speaking to a woman, you in fact hit him on the head with your rifle butt. A. That is not true.
- Q. Then you tell us you were put under arrest in June of 1944 and was still in arrest right up to the 12th April; is that right? A. I was released on the 28th August, but only for a week, because on the 7th September I was rearrested again and stayed in prison until that other week which I mentioned before.
- Q. How many of you do you say cycled away from Auschwitz? A. 18 prisoners and 5 guards.
- Q. Did you go the whole way to Belsen on your bicycle? A. No, only up to Herzberg, and then we boarded a train.
- Q. How far is Herzberg from Auschwitz? How long did it take you? A. Every day about 15 to 20 kilometres cycling and I believe about 9 or 10 days the whole journey.
- Q. Do you mean you only cycled for about an hour each day? A. We had to walk more than we could cycle, because it was very cold and there was a heavy snow fall and mountains, so we rather walked than cycled.
- Q. It is not more than about two and a half hours walking a day, is it? A. We took it very easy. We stopped quite a few times and had a grog or two, and had a cigarette or two, and then we walked slowly and gently away.
- Q. It must be rather fun being a prisoner of the S.S., is not it? A. During the time in prison it was they who commanded, but on the journey it was we who commanded.
- Q. Who was in charge of this extraordinary party? A. There were four, Kraft, Peter, Murtens, Fischke; the name of the man from the political department I do not know.
- Q. It took you a whole month to get from Auschwitz to Belsen? A. Yes, but we passed through several other concentration camps, Grossrosen, Oranienburg, near Berlin, then Buchenwald, then Mittelbau, and only then after that we arrived in Belsen.
- Q. Was Kraft in the same company as you? A. Oberscharfuhrer Kraft came from Lublin; he was a clerk at the court in Auschwitz.
- Q. When you got to Belsen what was the condition of the camp? A. We arrived late, about 11 o'clock, and I did duty only for a week, and as I mentioned before I was on guard only twice, the third time I was arrested, I was detained; so I really cannot say very much about the camp.
- Q. What was the general condition of the camp when you first saw it? A. I really cannot say very much about the conditions. I did not see any sort of bodies or corpses lying about, but I have been told about hunger.
- Q. Do you say that when you did duty it was in one of those watch towers? A. Yes.
- Q. And you never saw any bodies lying about? A. At that time, no.
- Q. Did not you ever come down into the compound? A. No, only with the British.
- Q. Where were you when you were trying to give a letter to this girl in the women's compound? A. In the catwalk between the two compounds; between the men's compound and the women's compound.



- Q. Under whose command were you?                      Kramer.
- Q. He did not command the guard company, did he?                      A. I do not know very much; I have done duty only twice and I do not know his name. I was not very much interested in it.
- Q. There was a separate guard company to guard outside, was not there?                      A. I do not know who commanded the guard company. I know that one Sunday commandant Kramer came into my cell and four or five of us were released, and we had to sign that we shall continue to do our duty in a better way; but I do not know very much more about that.
- Q. I suggest that from then on you did ordinary duty in the camp?                      A. No, that is not true.
- Q. Do you remember the water supply at the camp?                      A. I do not know anything about water supply.
- Q. Did you get plenty of water when you were in the camp?                      A. During the time when I was in detention we had very little water; we had no water for drinking purposes, and about washing, well, once we washed and once we did not.
- Q. You heard of course - because it has been read - what Dolinski said about you, that you were guarding some people who were doing repair work on a ditch?
- A. Yes, I remember his affidavit, but I do not think he was in the court.
- Q. No, he was not in court. It is the affidavit I am talking about. Were prisoners working on a drainage system?                      A. I do not know.
- Q. Did you hear when Kramer gave his evidence when he was talking about his drainage system?                      A. Yes, I remember that.
- Q. I suggest to you that you were guarding men working on that ditch and that you kicked one into the ditch.                      A. I can only say that I had been doing two full days duties, 24 hours, guarding on the tower, and the third time, on a Sunday, I was just starting my duty and after half an hour I have been arrested.
- Q. I suggest to you that when that man got out you hit him on the head with a spade.                      A. I can only say it is not true.
- Q. I want to come to the last few days in that camp. You say you left the camp on the 12th?                      A. Yes, at 4.30 in the afternoon.
- Q. Did you leave it under arrest?                      A. Yes, under guard.
- Q. How did you get away from your guard?                      A. There were several air raid warnings on that day, and always when a warning came we had to run into the woods and stay there till it was over. There were a number of prisoners, concentration camp prisoners, and there were a number of these prisoners under guard. It was about 8 or 8.30 and it was dark, so suddenly I thought: "Why should I go to Hamburg at all. I do not feel like it at all", and so I got away.
- Q. Was that on the night of the 12th?                      A. Yes.
- Q. What did you do then?                      A. Then I went walking and arrived in a village called Sülze, and there I waited in the house of a family until the British troops arrived.
- Q. I am going to put this to you: that you were not released from that camp at all on the 12th.                      A. I can only repeat that I left on the 12th as a normal prisoner without my belt, with open tunic, looking just like any prisoner.
- Q. What I am suggesting to you is that you were released from arrest in that last frantic effort to clean the camp up.                      A. I can only repeat that I was not under the jurisdiction of Kramer because my papers belonged to concentration

camp Mittelbau. That is where I have been judged. Kramer had nothing to say and I had nothing to do with Kramer. We were very much overcrowded in the prison and there we were sitting and waiting in detention.

Q. Do you say that you had been judged by Mittelbau? A. Yes. The court section from Auschwitz was transferred to Mittelbau.

Q. But you had been released by Kramer already in respect of anything you had done before you got there, had not you? A. Yes. Kramer received a telegram. I do not know who sent it, but he had a telegram and that is how and why I had been released.

Q. This second arrest was for an offence in the camp at Belsen, was not it? A. Yes.

Q. And you had not been tried for that, had you? A. No. My case had not been dealt with, but I was told, or I understood, that our cases would be dealt with in a sort of very quick summary way, and that is the reason why I escaped, because I did not want that it should be dealt with in Hamburg in this way.

Q. And then Kramer released you, did not he? A. No, we left Belsen under guard.

Q. I suggest to you that you were acting as a guard inside that camp right up to the time the British came. A. It cannot be, because until 1.30 on the 12th April I was in detention.

Q. Did you see the prisoners dragging the corpses away? A. I have not seen that.

Q. Do you remember Flazich being released? A. Yes, I remember that.

Q. Two or three days before you were? A. Yes.

Q. Were not you standing supervising those people dragging the corpses away? A. No.

Q. And beating them on the head and the body with your rifle as they went? A. No.

Q. You heard the witness Druillenc give an account of that procession, did not you? A. Yes, I remember.

Q. I suggest to you that you in common with every other S.S. man who could be found in either camp was put on trying to clear that camp up, on that procession. A. I was in detention at that time waiting trial, so nobody could force me to work unless I volunteered for it.

CAPT. BROWN: No re-examination.

THE JUDGE ADVOCATE: I do not want to ask you anything else except about your arrest, because I do not understand that. When you were put in arrest in June 1944 were you brought before some court and sentenced to some period of detention? A. I was sentenced by the S.S. police court and got a sentence of five months with the possibility to join the front line.

Q. Why were you released on the 28th August then? A. Because this police court had not a proper jurisdiction, and the sentence was not right or was promulgated only after having been approved by Obergruppenfuhrer Schneider, and he reduced the sentence so that I was released in August.

Q. Why were you rearrested a week later? A. I was on guard guarding two male persons who came into the bathhouse of the women's compound to do some repairs on the chimney, and they had a bottle of schnapps and I was just drinking with them.

Q. I do not want to hear all that. Do I gather you committed another offence? A. Yes.



Q. What did you get this time? A. Two years imprisonment, again with the possibility of a front line job.

Q. Who gave you that sentence? A. Again the S.S. court at Katowice.

Q. Where were you supposed to serve this long sentence of two years? A. I should have served this sentence in Auschwitz, No.1., block No.11.

Q. Then you came to Belsen doing the two years sentence; is that right?

A. When Auschwitz was evacuated then we were sent to several other camps ----

Q. I do not want all that. When you came to Belsen you were still undergoing the two years sentence; is that right? A. Yes.

Q. And who had the right at Belsen to interfere with that sentence?

A. Only Obergruppenfuhrer Schmeiser had the right.

Q. And did he interfere with it? A. We were only told at the court that it will be passed on to high authority of Obergruppenfuhrer Schmeiser, who had the right either to diminish or to increase the punishment.

Q. Who ordered your release from this two years sentence then in March?

A. Kramer had a telegram in his hand. That is the reason why we were released.

Q. Then you committed another offence; is that right? A. Yes.

Q. And I gather you say you were never tried for that? A. Not yet.

Q. And were you left waiting for nearly a month before you were tried for this offence? A. Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: You said you were released from arrest at 1330 on 12th April? A. Yes.

Q. And you had said before that you left Belsen at 1630 on the 12th April?

A. We were released at 1330, but we waited in the wood just near the camp until 1630, and there we had something to eat.

Q. Did you not go back into the camp during those three hours? A. No, we were under guard.

Q. The next thing you said was you were captured by the British troops approximately 10 kilometres from Belsen? A. Yes.

Q. How did you get back to Belsen? A. I was captured on Sunday 15th at 1330 hours and was put in a P.O.W. Camp in Celle. There I was questioned where I came from and I said that I came from the camp at Belsen, so the captain there in charge put me into a truck and sent me to Belsen on Monday.

A MEMBER OF THE COURT: You mentioned that an unterschar fuhrer Kraft was in charge of the party from Auschwitz. Is it the one in the dock?

A. No.

THE PRESIDENT: Have you any questions on what the court has asked?

CAPT. BROWN: No, Sir.

A MEMBER OF THE COURT: You stated that the only guard duties you did in Auschwitz were in the towers; is that correct? A. Yes.

Q When you were asked why you were re-arrested in September you stated you were in the bath-house. What were you doing there? A. During the day-time I did the duty as kind of runner, and as two prisoners had to go to that bath-house I had to go with them to guard them.

THE PRESIDENT: Have you any question arising out of that, Captain Brown?

CAPT. BROWN: No.

(The accused, Ladislaw Gura, leaves the place from which he has given his evidence)

CAPT. BROWN: The next accused I represent is Fritz Mathes, number 18, and I propose to put him in the witness box to tell his story. I will then call one witness on his behalf.

THE ACCUSED, FRITZ MATHES takes his stand at the place from which the other witnesses have given their evidence and having been duly sworn is examined by CAPTAIN BROWN as follows:-

Q What is your full name? A. Fritz Mathes.

Q Where and when were you born? A. The 13th June 1893 at Offenbach.

Q When did you join the German army? A. On the 26th July 1944.

Q Did you volunteer to join? A. No.

Q Where did you go then? A. We had training in Frankfurt for eight days and then we went to Berlin.

Q Did you say for eight days? A. Eight weeks.

Q How long were you in Berlin? A. Five days.

Q And then where did you go? A. We went to Bennefelt in the neighbourhood of Bomlitz.

Q How long were you there? A. 20th November 1944.

Q How long were you there actually? A. From the 1st September until the 20th November.

Q What were you doing there? A. I was working at a munition factory - a powder factory.

Q Where did you go from there? A. To Belsen.

Q When did you arrive there? A. On the 22nd or 23rd November.

Q How were you employed at Belsen? A. I was working in the SS kitchen.

Q Were you working in the SS cookhouse all the time you were there? A. No; I worked in the SS cookhouse until the 10th or 15th January 1945.

THE JUDGE ADVOCATE: I am not quite clear about this. You say he joined the German Army. Is he an SS man or is he not?



CAPT. BROWN: I have not come to that point yet. (To the witness) After you were employed in the SS cookhouse how were you employed? A. In the bath-house.

Q Were you employed in the bath-house right up to the 15th April 1945?  
A. Yes.

Q When did you join the SS? A. On the 25th January 1945.

Q Why did you join the SS? A. Our pay books were withdrawn and on the 1st February we received pay books from the SS.

Q Were you then given an SS uniform? A. Yes.

Q Did any others join the SS at the same time? A. 30 men all coming from Frankfurt.

Q Were they men who came with you? A. Yes.

Q Were you ever in the prisoners part of Belsen camp? A. No; once before Christmas I went with some SS men to the stores to get some shoes. It was in front of the camp.

Q Was that the only time you were in the prisoners' part of the camp?  
A. Yes.

Q Were both the SS cookhouse and the bath-house in the same administrative area of the camp? A. Yes, in the SS camp.

Q Did you ever work in No.2 cookhouse? A. No.

Q Were you ever in No.2 cookhouse? A. No.

Q You have seen the deposition of Paul Cech? (Page 46 exhibit 20) A. Yes.

Q That man stated in his affidavit that you were the chief of No.2 kitchen at Belsen and that you fired your pistol at some men who were trying to steal carrots, and that incidents such as that occurred everyday up to the 15th April. What have you to say about that? A. I was not in kitchen 2 so it cannot have been me. It must have been a mistake. He must have meant Heuskel, the chief of that kitchen. He looks rather like me. He is the same size and the same age.

Q I am now going to refer to the deposition of Wilhelm Grunwald. (No.37 exhibit 55) This man also says in his statement that he saw you shooting at some prisoners who were trying to steal some carrots. What do you say to that? A. I must make the same reply as I made before.

Q I am now going to refer to the deposition of Paul Lichtenstein (page 93 exhibit 54). This man also says that you were the chief of No.2 kitch and that he saw you shooting prisoners who were trying to steal some carrots; and he says this happened on several occasions. What do you say to that? A. I must give the same answer I gave before.

Q Did you ever shoot any prisoners? A. No.

Q Did you ever ill-treat any prisoners by beating them? A. No.

(The remaining defending officers do not  
desire to cross-examine this witness)

Cross-examined by COLONEL BACKHOUSE

- Q What was your duty at Bennefelt ? Were you a guard of the prisoners there ? A. No; I kept the books. I was working in the administration.
- Q That was a place where prisoners were working, was not it ? A. Prisoners were working there, yes.
- Q That was guarded by the SS too, was not it ? A. No, the guards were Wehrmacht, but the lagerfuhrer was an SS man from Belsen, and we were under a captain.
- Q Had you ever been a cook before you arrived at Belsen ? A. Yes.
- Q Where ? A. In Bennefelt I was working at the administration and I was a cook as well.
- Q Just exactly where was the SS kitchen ? A. In Belsen. The SS kitchen was in the front part of the SS area not far from the bath-house.
- Q Was not it on that main street running through the camp ? A. Yes.
- Q Did not prisoners pass it regularly as they were going to and from work ? A. Yes.
- Q Did they never try and get under the wire and steal anything ? A. No; that was not possible because they marched in columns and could not leave their ranks.
- Q Was there a pile of food outside the kitchen ? A. Not in our kitchen.
- Q Then you say you went from the kitchen to the bath-house ? A. Yes.
- Q All these allegations against you are made in the last week or two, are not they ? A. Yes, I have seen it must have been in the last week.
- Q What were you doing in the bath-house after the water was turned off ? A. We have had water until the 11th.
- Q What did you do from the 11th onwards ? A. We had to do all kinds of repairs works in the bath-house.
- Q The bath-house was not used after the fuel ran out either, was it ? A. Well, there was still some coal left, and we used some wood from old chairs, wardrobes and every kind of material we could use. We also burned a pile of old soles of shoes.
- Q In the bath-house ? A. Yes.
- Q When was this ? A. During two months or one month and a half we mixed coal with this old leather and boots.
- Q I am talking about the last week or two after all the coal had run out. We have been told by witnesses that the bath-house could not be used because not only had you run out of water, but you had also run out of fuel. Is not that true ? A. We used the bath-house until the 5th and 6th and then it was deloused.
- Q I am suggesting to you that after that you went back to your old trade as a cook ? A. No; we bathed and deloused until the 5th and 6th and we could bathe Arbeitskommandos until the 11th.



- Q Was not water short at that time ? A. No, there was hot water until the 11th and it was not my job to see that there was water. It was the job of the man heating the stoves.
- Q Did a lot of the SS leave on the 11th April ? A. Yes, about the 12th the SS Company left and I should go with them, but I asked Kramer to be allowed to stay behind.
- Q Who took the cookhouse over after you gave it up ? A. Another man called Melcher and I were in charge of the cookhouse until the last. He is still in hospital.
- Q You know, do not you, that he was charged as well as you with shooting from the same kitchen as you were charged ? A. Yes, he was with me.
- Q You were always together in the same kitchen whilst you were a cook, were not you ? A. Until the last Melcher was with me in the bath-house.
- Q He was in the bath-house too, was he ? I thought you said he was in the cookhouse with you ? A. He was in the bath-house with me until we were arrested.
- Q Was he in the cookhouse with you ? A. No, he was in the bath-house not in the kitchen. He had nothing to do with the kitchen.
- Q I will ask you again. Who took over the kitchen when you left it ? A. The SS kitchen chief, May.
- Q Melcher was never in the kitchen at all ? A. No, he was never in the kitchen. He came from Auschwitz in March and he went to the bath-house.
- Q In those last few days when you agree that, at any rate, from the 11th the bath-house had no water, I suggest to you that you went back to your old employment of cook when the SS left ? A. No, all the cookhouse personnel were in the SS kitchen were still there.
- Q Flrazich was not available, according to himself; he was either in arrest or on leave. Are you sure you did not take his place ? A. I have seen Flrazich twice; once in the office and once in the store. He was a prisoner there.
- Q Are you really suggesting that you look like Heuskel ? A. I will not say that I look like him. We were the same age, same size, and he was working in the kitchen too, so there must have been a mistake.
- Q He had a mop of hair, had not he ? (No answer)
- Q Just look at this photograph (SGC 5 handed) A. Yes, that is Heuskel.
- Q He is nothing like you at all, is he ? He is a broad shouldered man with a large mop of hair and a square chin. A. I did not say that he looked like me. I said he must have mistaken him for me.
- Q He did a good deal of shooting of internees, did not he ? A. I do not know.
- Q Let me make it plain to you, I am not suggesting that you were necessarily in Kitchen No.2. Quite a lot of people did not know the numbers of those kitchens, did they ? A. I do not know.
- Q Even the Aufseherin herself told us she did not know the number of the kitchen. A. I cannot say anything about that. I did not bother with the kitchen.
- Q Did not you think it strange that three quite different people have recognised you as the person who was responsible for these shootings ? A. Yes; I cannot tell you how this could happen.
- Q Cech recognised your photograph and his affidavit says that prisoners were trying to steal carrots from the pile outside the kitchen. A. I was not in the kitchen. I do not know anything about the pile because I was in the bath-house.
- Q Grunwald says precisely the same thing in effect that two prisoners tried to crawl through the hole in the wire surrounding the kitchen and that you came out and shot them. A. I cannot have been this man because I have nothing to do with the kitchen.



- Q And Lichtenstein says that on several occasions from the 7th April onwards he saw you do the same thing ? A I say again I was not in the kitchen; I have not been shooting; it must be a mistake.
- Q The camp by that time was in a terrible state, was it not ? A I cannot say, because I never was in the camp.
- Q Well you could see it from the S.S. compound quite easily, could you not ? A No. If you wanted to go back to the compounds you need a special permit from the Commandant and a special armlet.
- Q You did not need to go into the compound, did you ? You could smell it ? A I have not smelt anything.
- Q And I suppose you never saw any bodies lying about either ? A I went into the bath house at 6 or half past 6, and I left it at 2300 hours.
- Q That does not quite answer the question. Did you ever see any bodies lying about ? A No, I did not see any bodies lying around. Before I was taken prisoner I had not worked in the camp.
- Q And you never saw anything of this procession of people dragging bodies away in that last three or four days ? A No.
- Q You stayed all day from 6 in the morning till 8 at night in the bath house with neither water nor fuel in it; is that right ? A Yes; we had our work there. We were repairing the taps and other things.
- Q All day from 6 in the morning till 8 o'clock at night for four or five days ? A Yes. Now and then we went out to get our food and sometimes we played cards. For instance, Egersdorf was also there.
- Q I see. Egersdorf is going to be there as well, is he ? A Yes, he had been sleeping there.
- Q Commandant Kramer, who was trying his best to do something for the prisoners and to clean up the camp, and who was crying out for staff, left the three of you playing cards in an empty bath house, did he ? A We did our work as we were supposed to do.
- Q But after the water had been turned off and the fuel had run out, what on earth was your work for three of you in a bath house ? A There was quite a lot of work to do. One of us was working on the stoves, and the others were working on the taps, and other things in the bath house. There was quite a lot of work to do and certainly more than you could do in one day.
- Q I put it to you that there is not one word of truth in this story of yours about being in the bath house for the last few days ? A Everything I told is true.
- Q And is not the real truth of the matter that you and Melcher were both employed in the kitchen and that you both indulged in this popular sport of shooting internees who came up to the kitchen and tried to get an odd carrot or potato peeling ? A No. I must repeat that I was in the bath house until we were arrested.
- Q What was Egersdorf's job there ? A He had nothing to do in the bath house; he was only sleeping there at night.
- Q What was his job in the camp ? A He was in the food store.
- Q How long was Melcher in the bath house with you ? A Since the middle of March.



Q When did you first run out of fuel for the bath house ? A We had fuel until the last; we had more fuel than water. We were burning this old leather and wood.

Re-examined by CAPTAIN BROWN.

Q When did you stop working in the S.S. cookhouse and start work in the bath house ? A I stopped work in the kitchen at the 10th or 15th January and began my job in the bath house on the 10th or 15th January.

THE JUDGE ADVOCATE: When you joined the S.S., what rank were you given ?  
A Since 1915 I have been an N.C.O. and I have remained that until now.

Q What was the German rank you held when you were at Belsen ?  
A Unterscharfuhrer.

Q And when you were working in this kitchen you were holding the rank of Unterscharfuhrer, were you ? A Yes, in the S.S. kitchen I was unterscharfuhrer.

Q What rank did Heuskel have ? A He was Oberscharfuhrer.

Q And how many cooks were there in the S.S. kitchen ? A Four.

Q Who was the chief cook ? A May.

Q Were you the next one ? A Yes.

Q What was May's rank ? A Sturmscharfuhrer; more than a Serjeant; I was a Corporal.

Q Did May have to look after more than one kitchen or not ? A No, he had only the S.S. kitchen.

Q Had this S.S. kitchen got any number at all ? A No.

Q How was it referred to officially then ? How was it described officially in German ? A S.S. Kitchen.

Q And when these witnesses in their affidavit speak about No. 2 kitchen, what kitchen do you think they were meaning then ? I will put it in a simpler way. Describe what you would call No. 2 kitchen in Belsen. A I did not know the kitchen No. 2.

Q Did you carry a pistol ? A No.

Q Were there any S.S. guards posted round the S.S. kitchen in the later days, do you know ? A I cannot tell.

A MEMBER OF THE COURT: Did you know this man Heuskel well ? A He was sleeping in the same hut as I was sleeping.

Q Which cookhouse did you say he was in charge of ? A As far as I know it was kitchen No. 2 because this kitchen was mentioned in the affidavit.

Q But I thought you said you had never heard of kitchen No. 2 before ?  
A I did not know kitchen No. 2, but then in several affidavits his name is mentioned in connection with kitchen No. 2.

Q It could quite easily have been somebody else then ? A As far as I know there was only kitchen No. 2, as the affidavits mentioned. That is all I know about kitchen No. 2. I have been asking several of the accused about kitchen 2. Franzich told me there was a kitchen 2. Egersdorf told me there was only one kitchen 2, and that is all I know about it.

ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE COURT: Were you in charge of the bath house ? A Yes.

Q How many S.S. men had you got under you ? A Melsher and two men of the Wehrmacht.

THE PRESIDENT: Have you anything to ask on the question put by the Court ?

CAPTAIN BROWN: No.

(The accused leaves the place from which he has given his evidence).

GISELA KOBLISCHEK is called in.

THE JUDGE ADVOCATE: The witness is giving evidence in German and taking an oath on the bible which she says is binding on her conscience.

GISELA KOBLISCHEK, having been duly sworn is examined by CAPTAIN BROWN as follows:

Q What is your full name ? A Gisela Koblischek.

Q Where and when were you born ? A On the 11th December, 1920, at Haselbach in Czechoslovakia, near Prague.

Q Were you in Belsen concentration camp during the early part of this year ?  
A Yes, from the end of March until the 12th April, or in reality until the 17th April.

THE PRESIDENT: Until the 12th or the 17th ?

THE INTERPRETER: She would like to explain to you why 12th and why 17th.

CAPTAIN BROWN: During that time were you employed at No. 2 cookhouse ?  
A I was aufseherin in kitchen 2.

Q Who was the chief of that cookhouse ? A Oberscharfuhrer Heuskel.

Q Do you know this man ? (Accused No. 18, Fritz Mathes, stands up). A Yes.

Q Do you know his name ? A Fritz Mathes.

Q Do you know where he worked during the time you were at Belsen ? A Yes, in the bath house.

Q Was he ever in No. 2 cookhouse ? A I have never seen him in kitchen No. 2.

CAPTAIN BROWN: That concludes my examination.

(The remaining Defending Officers do not desire to question the witness).

Cross-examined by COLONEL BACKHOUSE.

Q Where did you get your training as an aufseherin ? A I was trained in Langbivlau. That belongs to concentration camp Grossrosen.

CAPTAIN BROWN: I would like to point out to the Court that this woman is at present under arrest in a prison. Perhaps the Court might give her a warning.

THE PRESIDENT (To the witness): You are not bound to give any answer which you think might incriminate you, and if you are not sure whether you should answer the questions asked by the Prosecutor, you can refer to the Court.  
A I understand.

COLONEL BACKHOUSE: How long were you in the S.S. ? A Nine months.



- Q. When did you come to Belsen? I am not quite sure. A. Approximately the 25th or 26th March;
- Q. What was the condition of the camp then? A. It looked pretty bad, but I cannot say very much, because I myself have not been very much in the camp. I stayed there where my place of work was and so therefore I do not know very much about it at all.
- Q. The kitchen No. 2 was the one you said you worked in? A. Yes.
- Q. That was in the camp itself, was it not? A. Yes, it is true, but I was not allowed to leave the place of my work. I stayed there in the cookhouse.
- Q. Who were the other aufseherin in your kitchen? A. Hompel.
- Q. Was she there the whole time that you were there? A. Yes.
- Q. And who were the kapos in there? A. I do not know their names.
- Q. Who were the other S.S. men? A. I believe Sturmman Wessel or some similar name - I do not remember.
- Q. And how did they behave to the people in the kitchen? A. About Wessel I cannot say very much, because I have seen him only once or twice, and about Heuskel, well, maybe he was severe, but I think he was just.
- Q. Did Heuskel do any shooting? A. I did not see it.
- Q. Just whereabouts was kitchen No. 2 in the camp? A. The second kitchen in the men's compound.
- Q. Who did it cook for? A. I do not know exactly, because it was not my job. I was in the part where vegetables were peeled; potatoes and turnips peeled.
- Q. Where was kitchen No. 1? A. That was No. 1 kitchen in the men's compound.
- Q. Who was in charge of that? A. I do not know.
- Q. What aufseherin worked in No. 1 kitchen? A. Ilse Forster.
- Q. And what others? A. And then the chief of the kitchen I know him by sight but I do not know his name.
- Q. Well, Ilse Forster was not the only one, was she? You had two aufseherin to each kitchen, did you not? A. I know that there were two, but I do not remember the name of the second aufseherin.
- Q. Did you ever go into the bath house itself in the last few days? A. No, I had only one duty; I was on duty in the bath house on a Sunday.
- Q. When was that? A. It was, I believe, the first or the second Sunday when I worked in Belsen camp.
- Q. And that was the last time you were in there? A. No, that was the last time.
- Q. When exactly did you leave Belsen itself? A. On the 17th April I was admitted to the hospital.
- Q. What exactly did you mean at the beginning of your examination about the 12th? A. On the 12th all aufseherin went to Neuengamme and we returned on the 13th.
- Q. You all went to Neuengamme and back in a day, on the 12th and 13th? A. Yes, we were recalled on the 13th.

- Q How did you go on the 12th ? A On trucks to Neuengamme, and on trucks returned from Neuengamme.
- Q How many aufseherin were there ? A I do not remember exactly.
- Q How many trucks ? A I do not know, because I boarded the first truck and I was also the first on the return journey, so therefore I do not know.
- Q You never noticed how many people and how many trucks came with you ?  
A I do not know. In my part there was only Klara Opitz and Bormann and myself, and in front another aufseherin.
- Q What did you find when you got to Neuengamme ? A Nothing at all, because when we arrived it was very late and dark, about 11 o'clock, and in the same night, at 3 o'clock in the morning, we were woken and at 5 o'clock we left again towards Belsen.
- Q Do you think it was when all the aufseherin disappeared that the people who were doing nothing in the bath house had to come back into the cockhouse ?  
A I do not know what you mean.
- Q You have not the slightest idea whether Mathes was in the bath house in the last week or not, have you ? A No, I do not know.

CAPTAIN BROWN: No re-examination.

(The witness withdraws).

(At 1312 hours the Court adjourns until 0930 hours on Monday, 22nd October, 1945).

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