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## Ray Gock oral history interview by Michael Hirsh, November 30, 2008

Roy Gock (Interviewee)

Michael Hirsh (Interviewer)

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Concentration Camp Liberators Oral History Project  
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Interviewer: Michael Hirsh (MH)  
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[Transcriber's note: The Interviewee's personal information has been removed, at the request of the Interviewer. This omission is indicated with ellipses.]

**Michael Hirsh:** Okay, your name is Roy Gock, G-o-c-k?

**Roy Glock:** Yeah, that's correct.

MH: What's your address, please? ...

RG: That's correct.

MH: And what's your date of birth?

RG: February 26, 1920.

MH: You were with the 14<sup>th</sup> Armored Division?

RG: Yeah.

MH: Which unit?

RG: I was with the 68<sup>th</sup> Armored Infantry, Company A.

MH: 68<sup>th</sup> Armored Infantry. What was your rank when you were in the service?

RG: (laughs) PFC [Private First Class].

MH: Okay, where were you before you went in the Army?

RG: Oh, I was at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, going to Signal Corps school. And then I was transferred—in fact, I missed the Battle of the Bulge because I was home during Christmas. And then I was sent to Texas for a second time infantry training, and then went overseas.

MH: Where did you grow up?

RG: I grew up in Oakland.

MH: In Oakland, okay. And you were drafted into the Army?

RG: No, I enlisted.

MH: Okay, how old were you when you enlisted?

RG: Oh, my goodness.

MH: Or what year?

RG: Nineteen forty-two, I think, I enlisted.

MH: You were about twenty-two years old.

RG: Yeah, right.

MH: When did you get to Europe?

RG: Some time in March of forty-five [1945].

MH: You got there almost at the very end of the war.

RG: Oh, yeah, I was lucky, lucky all the way.

MH: You went as a replacement, then?

RG: Yeah, as a replacement.

MH: You joined the 14<sup>th</sup> Armored Division.

RG: Yeah.

MH: 68<sup>th</sup> Armored Infantry Division.

RG: We landed in Le Havre, I think, and then the column was going so fast, we couldn't catch up with them.

MH: Where did you finally catch them?

RG: I must've caught them somewhere just after Moosberg, I think, just north of Munich. In fact, I was in Munich before I went into the column.

MH: Really?

RG: Yeah.

MH: So, you got to them at the end of April?

RG: Yeah, end of April, that's correct.

MH: Okay. What did you know about the concentration camps at that point?

RG: Well, you know, it just happened to be that—I think somewhere around April, end of April, my company was spearheading, and then we went back to combat reserve. And then, the Company B went up ahead. We saw them at the concentration camp at Ampfing. And we were waiting on the river for somebody to come out, and who came up? General [George S.] Patton.

MH: He came to the camp at Ampfing?

RG: Yeah, we came up. I think Company B was the liberators of the camp, and then we saw these people came out with pajamas, and we didn't know what the hell they were.

MH: What did you think?

RG: Well, I thought these people were something in detention, that's all.

MH: You hadn't been told anything at all about—

RG: No, we went through anything and we didn't know anything.

MH: Did you go into the camp?

RG: No, I didn't go into the camp because we had to cross the river, the Inn River.

MH: The Inn River? And the camp was on the other side?

RG: No, the camp was on the same side before we cross.

MH: How long were you around Ampfing, then?

RG: Well, I would say about five hours.

MH: Did you have a chance to talk to any of these people?

RG: There was an Air Force pilot that came out of the prison camp, and I gave him some of my C ration, and he was very happy to see us.

MH: What did he tell you?

RG: He said, "I'm sure glad to see you guys."

MH: What kind of shape was he in?

RG: He was in good shape. But the other prisoners, the others were so scrawny, and the funny thing, they didn't beg for anything.

MH: Really? I would've thought they'd have been asking for food.

RG: No, they didn't. They were very proud.

MH: Could you tell what language they were speaking?

RG: No, I didn't.

MH: What kind of a day was this?

RG: It was kind of a cloudy day.

MH: This would be spring in Germany.

RG: Well, it snowed May 1.

MH: Oh, okay.

RG: Yeah.

MH: What else do you remember? You never went into the camp?

RG: No, we couldn't go. I mean, we have to stay in the half-track, and we have to go across the river.

MH: What else do you remember about that day?

RG: The people—the Germans were running around, scared to death.

MH: Was there any shooting going on in that area?

RG: No, not at that time.

MH: You had mentioned you got to Mühldorf, too.

RG: I beg your pardon?

MH: You got to Mühldorf as well?

RG: Neudorf, yeah. We stayed in Neudorf, right outside Neudorf.

MH: Okay, and is that where Ampfing was?

RG: Ampfing was down the road. I have a map. You know, my sergeant had a map, a roadmap of a German service station roadmap. We fought the war with that map.

MH: With a German service station roadmap.

RG: Yeah.

MH: That's like using a Texaco map to fight a war in the United States.

RG: Yeah, same thing, like these gas station maps. I still have a copy of it.

MH: You didn't see the concentration camp at Muhldorf, then.

RG: No, I didn't, I'm sorry. We're lucky; we stay in the half-track and went across the river.

MH: What happened when you went across the river?

RG: Well, that was an incident where the tanks were stacked up with sandbags, because the German 88s were punching holes through them, and Patton was there, and he ordered them to be taken off. And they were bitching all the way.

MH: Where did they have the sandbags?

RG: Right on the side of the tank. And then the second thing I do remember was the medics were scraping the red cross off of the helmets, because the Germans were shooting them.

MH: Nice. Even at the end of the war?

RG: Even at the end of the war, yeah.

MH: Did you ever run into any SS?

RG: Yes, I didn't go over into one, but one night, my other party was on guard duty, and they stopped two SS officers and they had to take them as prisoners. And then, about four o'clock in the morning, the lieutenant woke me up and said, "You're going on guard duty. Guard these two men, and if they make a move, you shoot them."

MH: Did they make a move?

RG: No, they didn't make a move at all. Two hours.

MH: Too bad. (RG laughs) I understand from talking to a lot of guys that after they saw the concentration camps, they didn't take SS prisoners.

RG: They didn't, huh?

MH: No.

RG: We had to cross the river. Well, you know, you gotta keep going. You couldn't stop anywhere you wanted to stop.

MH: Where were you when the war ended?

RG: I was transferred sometime in August, I was transferred to the 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

MH: On V-E Day, where were you?

RG: V-E Day, I was in a little town somewhere near Velden, I think.

MH: In Austria?

RG: Yeah, in fact, it was right by Neudorf, somewhere around that area.

MH: Oh, okay. Then you got transferred to the 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry?

RG: Yeah.

MH: Did you like that better than armored? Or did you like armored better?

RG: Oh, here's a whole story. When I got to the 45<sup>th</sup>, I became the regimental colonel's orderly. I took the job because the company commander said, "If you take the job, you won't have to fight in Japan."

MH: Sounded like a good deal at the time.

RG: Oh, it was very good.

MH: When did you get out of the service?

RG: I got out in December 1945.

MH: Okay, and went back to the Bay area?

RG: Yeah, back to the Bay area.

MH: What'd you do there?

RG: I went back to school.

MH: Where?

RG: At Berkeley.

MH: At Berkeley.

RG: Yeah.

MH: You get your degree there?

RG: Yes, I did.

MH: In what?

RG: In mechanical engineering.

MH: Is that what you did for most of your life?

RG: No, I went into business and then I became a civil engineer.

MH: Okay. Anything else you can remember about the Ampfing situation?

RG: Ampfing situation, not very much, because we were just on the move. And you couldn't stop. We were stopped because we were waiting for Patton to come up and inspect the pontoon bridge.

MH: At any time, you didn't see any displaced people or former prisoners walking on the roads, did you?

RG: No, no, there was nobody around. There's a war going on.

MH: When the Germans started taking them on death marches—

RG: No, no, we didn't see that. The whole thing was in an uproar because the prisoners were out, running around, you know.

MH: Were they trying to keep them in the camp or were they just letting them go?

RG: They were just letting them go. They were free to walk wherever they want.

MH: Was it just men, or men and women?

RG: What I saw was just men.

MH: Anything else you can think of?

RG: Well, you know, somehow I was lucky to save a copy of the *Stars & Stripes*, and it had a little article about Ampfing, you know. That's how I was aware of where I was and I was aware that this was a concentration camp.

MH: What did the article say?

RG: I haven't read it for a while, but it mentioned it was a prison camp where they kept people there.

MH: You didn't take any pictures there, did you?

RG: No, I didn't take a picture at Ampfing, but I took pictures at Berchtesgaden.

MH: That's a whole other story.

RG: Yeah, that's another story.

MH: Thank you very much.

RG: I don't think I could help you much, but I saw the article and it mentioned about Ampfing and Muhldorf, and I was there.

MH: I appreciate your calling. What's the nickname of the 14<sup>th</sup> Armored Division?

RG: They call them the Liberators.

MH: The Liberators, okay. Thank you very much, sir. I really appreciate it.

RG: You're welcome. Nice talking to you.

MH: Nice talking with you. Bye-bye.

***End of interview***