



Associated Press

Inmates at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, which President Reagan will visit tomorrow, were too weak to stand when American troops arrived in April 1945. Two local men were among the first U.S. soldiers into the camps.

## Never forget, say camp liberators

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stacked one on top of another. Nearby was a large furnace, but at the time Tighe thought it was merely a heating unit.

In a courtyard outside the main gate, Tighe found 20 clothed prisoners, including an American in his flight jacket, shot dead. Most of the prisoners were Jews, wearing striped uniforms with large yellow Jewish stars.

"When I saw those bodies . . . I remember vividly the thought came to me: Humans did this," Tighe said. "And the thought that I was a human being too and probably under certain circumstances I could act this way . . . that's what I found frightening."

Tighe saw equally appalling sights a few days later when his division, part of Gen. George Patton's Third Army, liberated Buchenwald, where survivors had been deprived of food for six straight days.

Lyons, then 35 years old, recalled that there were rumors of atrocities at Nazi concentration camps, but like others, he did not really believe them. Then he was asked to visit Dachau by his commanding officer.

At the gate was an imposing bronze eagle perched on top of a

Nazi swastika. Inside, timid, emaciated inmates saluted their American liberators, but Lyons said they were an appalling, filthy sight.

They were kept under armed guard by the Americans, Lyons said, because officials worried they would spread typhus and other diseases if they were allowed to roam free.

In some corners of the camp, where more than 30,000 people were killed, Lyons said he saw "hundreds of male corpses, just dumped or chucked together in piles awaiting cremation."

"One's first reaction to this mound of corpses was one of horror and revolt," he said. "Then the odor emanating from the long unburied bodies was almost unbearable and the combination of the two led to a sickening feeling inside."

Lyons spent just two hours at the camp, but it was long enough to observe its litany of atrocities. There were the gas chambers, where newly arrived inmates were told to strip and prepare for a shower, only to be gassed to death.

Outside the camp were railroad freight cars, still filled with bodies of prisoners who died in a 21-day ride to Dachau. They were the Nazis' last shipment of prisoners to Dachau.

Through the years, both Tighe

and Lyons say they have tried not to dwell on the horrors they saw, but now they believe it is time to testify to the world of what they say.

Lyons, 75, a retired leasing agent for a Boston realty firm, said the Holocaust proved the human potential for destructive acts. What he saw led him to become an early opponent of the Vietnam War and a staunch opponent of anti-Semitism.

Indeed, he believes latent anti-Semitism in the United States prevented reports of concentration camp atrocities from reaching the American public. Officials, he now believes, were well aware of the camps in the early 1940s.

Tighe, 60, lives in Mansfield and has taught at Canton High School for 29 years. He said there is a strong need to remember the horrors.

The young, however, already have begun to forget, he said. Tighe recalls a high school senior asking him if he had been to Germany. Tighe replied that he did not like it very much because there was a war going on and Germans were shooting at him.

"They had a war in Germany?" was the student's astonished response.

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# 'You cannot put Nazism behind you'

By Robert Cohen  
Patriot Ledger Staff  
and William A. Diamond

Robert Tighe remembers the low, plaintive moan that rose from the sick and injured prisoners at the Buchenwald concentration camp just before it was liberated by the U.S. Army 40 years ago.

As his division crashed through a fence at the outside of the camp, the moan was eclipsed by a frenzied babble. The prisoners, abandoned hours before by their Nazi captors, pushed forward to meet their rescuers.

"This one guy got a hold of my foot ... and he started kissing it," said Tighe, who teaches English at Canton High School. "That didn't seem right, but I didn't want to pull my foot away because these people were all dirty and I didn't want them to think I didn't want anything to do with them."

It was a moment that Tighe cannot forget, an end to one of the 20th century's darkest episodes — the systematic killing of six million European Jews by Nazis who considered them an inferior race.

President Reagan plans to commemorate the Holocaust tomorrow by visiting the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp as part of his trip through West Germany. The visit

was scheduled after a national furor arose over Reagan's decision to lay a wreath at a German military cemetery in Bitburg, where 49 Nazi SS soldiers are buried. The cemetery visit also is set for tomorrow.

Frederick Lyons of Milton was also among the U.S. soldiers who were the first to see concentration camps in the final days of World War II in Europe. Tuesday will mark 40 years since he was at the Dachau concentration camp. What he remembers most vividly, Lyons says, was the face of a beautiful, brown-haired Polish girl nearly buried in a 10-foot-high pile of corpses.

Tighe and Lyons, both of whom oppose Reagan's cemetery visit, said in recent interviews that they thought it was important to let others know what they saw at the concentration camps.

"You can put the war behind you, you can put the deaths of a lot of American boys and a lot of German boys behind you," Tighe said. "But you cannot put Nazism and the concentration camps that resulted from that bigotry behind."

At the time the camps were liberated, there was little public knowledge of the Nazis' attempts to exterminate the Jews and Gypsies and their imprisonment and torture of political prisoners. To two young American soldiers, the thought of



Lyons



Tighe

systematic execution and starvation of prisoners was shocking.

Tighe recalled that his first inkling that the camps were not just elaborate jails came as his division was chasing Adolf Hitler at Gotha in the waning days of the war. They unwittingly chose to camp near the Ohrdruf concentration camp, a subsidiary of the larger Buchenwald complex.

At about 6 one night in early April, Tighe and a friend scouted the area. They came upon what appeared to be chicken coops but which in fact were barracks.

The abandoned camp reeked with a strong odor, and one of the sheds was filled with naked corpses stacked

## Summit leaders won't support trade embargo

Patriot Ledger news services

BONN, West Germany — Summit leaders refused yesterday to support President Reagan's trade embargo on Nicaragua and steered clear of his prized "Star Wars" plan, but did endorse his strategy in nuclear arms control talks.

The summit deadlocked last night in a clash between Reagan and French President Francois Mitterrand over U.S. demands to begin new trade talks in 1986.

There was widespread unhappiness among summit delegations about the total trade embargo imposed on Nicaragua Wednesday.

"They're not satisfied with our course of conduct, but it was something we felt we had to do," acknowledged White House chief of staff Donald T. Regan.

"The Europeans don't agree that sanctions are a good tool to use for foreign policy purposes, by and large," said Secretary of State George P. Shultz.

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