

Stella DeLeon

Video Transcripts

Video 1: Stella DeLeon Tattoo

Then after three days we were there. They put—we went to another barrack and we stayed there by the hours and hours, standing ‘til each of us got the number. And each—the way they put it was—it’s each point I have here. They had tables and tables of the Germans doing this. And each point, it was put with ink. They pinch you and the ink went in and mixed with the blood. And that’s in the [?], if we move, somebody’s behind us, they will beat you up. We had to stay still. The blood was coming all around and everything. Finally, after that, they called you by the number. We didn’t know a word of German. It made it hard for us and when they start calling the number, we didn’t answer. Then they used to come with rubber hose, hitting us, beating us.

Video 2: Stella DeLeon Burning Smell

We could smell the flesh burning. You couldn’t help it because that chimney was burning constantly. And we could smell it. And one—about a week or two weeks after I was there, I went to look—a train load came—and we were watching what they were gonna do. And as I was watching this I saw with my own eyes. This German—a mother had this little six months old baby—and this German told her to give to somebody the child. And she didn’t want to give up the child. The German got so mad at her, he grabbed the child, turned her upside down, and tore that child in half. Split it in half, and threw it under the railroad tracks. Now can you see a mother, seeing that. It’s uncanny what the things we saw—the things the Germans did. It was unhuman. It was bad. Yet, we knew—when I was in that camp—yet, I knew in my mind that I was gonna survive. I was gonna get out of there. I was gonna find my family. I was gonna—in back of my mind I says “Nope, we getting out of here. We are gonna get out of here.”

Video 3: Stella DeLeon Diseases in the Camp

We all getting sick. We were getting typhoid, [dysentery?], and then we had—our bodies was full of lice. You put your hand like this [grabbing motion away from body], you get handfuls of lice. Living things in our bodies. It was as skeletons, you know. You get TB and typhoid. My youngest sister Janetta die of typhoid, three days before we were liberated. And, I know I had typhoid and I had lice all over my body, and I had TB. I had all three of them. Don’t look at me now I’m healthy, though, I weighed less than 60 pounds when they—I was liberated. And it was really—we could not stand up, we could not uh—we crawled. We wanna go someplace, or talk to somebody, we crawl, because you can’t stand up. That’s

how bad it was. To me, Bergen-Belsen—I call it the death camp. There, I figure, that’s the end of me. For all the times I was in the camps, in Auschwitz, and everything, I always had the feeling, “I’m gonna survive. I’m gonna get out of here.” Though by time all this, by time the end—the middle of April, I figure, “No way I can survive and get out”—especially after my little sister die, “That’s it. I’ll be going pretty soon too.”