

## From the Testimony of Abraham Eckstein about Escaping a Death March

...Q: So you were taken again in trains? In trains from Buchenwald to Bissingen?

A: Bissingen, yes. Unfortunately, that they didn't take too long there because the enemy was approaching and we were transported in different little camps there in the vicinity and this camp had to be closed because the enemy approached, so they took us to Leutkirch. Leutkirch was also a small camp and we stayed there about a week or ten days, that's about all, and then we had to also...then we were there, we had to go and take apart the entire camp. They didn't want to show for the enemy when they come in that there was a concentration camp. And then there was the *oberscharfuehrer* said that: "We are going to go and march." He didn't say what we're going to do, but we're going to march. And he calls the attention to anybody, anybody who is going to not move and not going to march or is going to fall together, then he's going to be shot. And we started to march and we walked and there was people who cannot walk. One of them thought he couldn't walk so they took him in the wood and they shot him. We heard the shot. Yes, we heard the shot. And we were walking like that. I had some difficulty with my brother because he didn't want to do nothing. He had a blanket. I said: "Take your blanket." No, he doesn't want to take the blanket because it's too hot on him. I said: "Look, if there's going to come a rain or whatever it is, what is..." So he took his blanket. And the next night we supposed to sleep on a place, but the *oberscharfuehrer* came and said we have to get up and go and it was raining, such a rain. So they started to say that we should line up, but the soldiers, the German SS going to start again to count, *appell*. They said: "Never mind. Come on, let's go. Don't count, let's go, let's go!" The *oberscharfuehrer* said was not necessary anymore the *appell*. Just go because the enemy was so close and they had orders not to leave any behind, you know. But the guard, the protection, wasn't so strict already as we were walking. We couldn't walk anymore, nobody. Couldn't sleep, just walk. The minute they gave us a little

rest I fall asleep and I fall asleep already all of a sudden, they was going to wake us up and go. And we're going and we're going and I saw that people cannot stand up anymore and they jump into the woods. So I said to my brother, I said: "Look, we have two alternatives. You want to go drop dead here that he should, the SS man, shoot us? Or let's take a chance and jump in the wood, too." As a matter of fact one was a very nasty man who always had a gun in his hand, he wants to shoot and he shot some people after they jump into the woods so we figured we... I said: "Okay" so we jumped also into the wood, but we heard shots, but over our heads.

Q: He was aiming at you?

A: Yes. About seven, eight shots already went on the side, you know. But we survived. So that night we slept over, several boys we know, we slept over in the woods.

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