

DACHAU: A FIRST HAND PERSPECTIVE TO BUILD EMPATHY AND TOLERANCE

Part 4: THE GAS CHAMBER

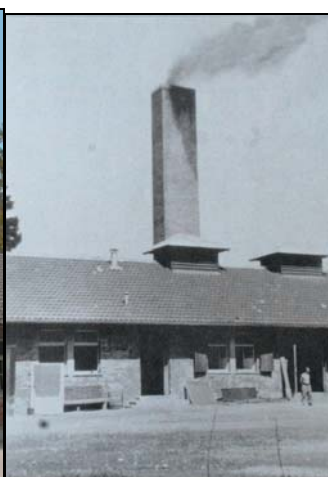
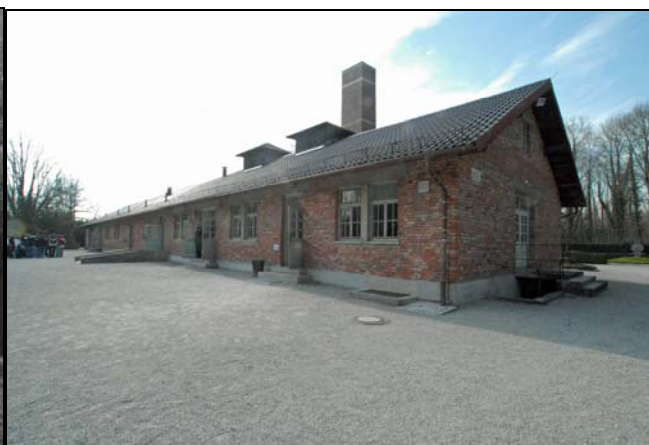


This is the bridge that actually takes you out of the camp area. Once you cross this bridge, you head up to the crematorium and gas chamber, which were located outside the main camp.

NOTE: It is important to understand that Dachau was a “work camp,” not a “death camp.” Therefore, the primary purpose of the camp was not to kill the inmates, but to work them until they died. Even so, some prisoners were gassed at Dachau, such as in killing those with tuberculosis, typhus, some with mental disorders and to test the gas chambers to make sure they are fully functional. Still, these gas chambers were quite capable of doing the job and the Nazis made sure of it. So, what you are about to see is a gas chamber and a crematorium that were fully functional. ¹⁾



Today, as soon as you cross the bridge leaving the main camp area but before you reach the crematorium and gas chamber, you will see off to your right a stone monument. Its engraving says, **“Remember How We Died Here.”**



Outside the Crematorium/Gas Chamber

And as you slowly walk up the road from the bridge, you slowly see the building come into view ... just like it did to all those people decades ago.

GAS CHAMBER: “CHANGING/DISINFECTING AREA”



This is at the far end of the gas chamber and crematorium building. You would have been brought to this end first. You would have been told these were the “Changing Rooms” of the “Disinfecting Area.”

You would have then walked into these chambers and these huge steel doors would have slammed shut behind you.



As you can see, there is not much room in here. If you look towards the ceiling, you will see the hooks the prisoners would have used to hang up their clothes. I was able to touch them standing flat footed and I am a “towering” 5’7” tall. You can see how low the ceiling is, much like a tomb.



Naked, I would have been taken out through the other end of the chamber.

GAS CHAMBER: HOLDING AREA

Still naked, I would have then been taken back out into the courtyard and then into the “Holding Room.” The Nazis actually had a couple of these holding rooms. You would have huddled together with your fellow prisoners trying to stay warm as you waited for your “shower.” You would just stand there ... and wait.



GAS CHAMBER

Once in the shower, prisoners might hear the sound of Zyklon B being pumped into the fake shower heads. Once exposed to the air, the loose crystals would then emit hydrogen cyanide gas. Within 20 minutes, a room full of 150 humans would be extinguished. ²



Zyklon-B Poisonous Gas

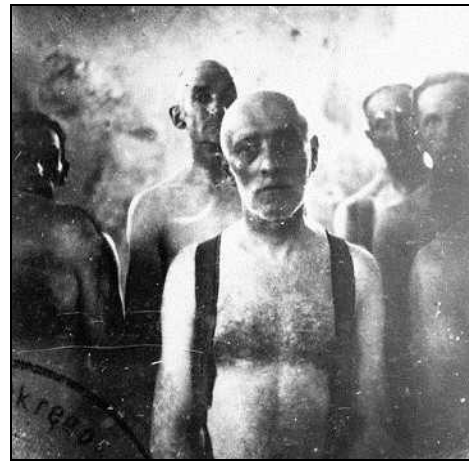


Photo of prisoners being gassed.



This is the Dachau gas chamber. There are six drains on the floor and six fake shower heads in the ceiling. Of course, there wasn't any water. If you've ever seen that scene from "Schindler's List" where the women are huddled into the showers at Auschwitz, this is very similar. Of course, that was a movie. This is the real thing.

If you ever wanted to experience pure evil, this is it. You are standing in it right now.

I was talking with my son Michael earlier after one of our tours and he told me that he saw the "Devils' Footprint" at the Church of our Lady in Munich. He said he was surprised because he expected it to be a cloven hoof print ... not the footprint of a man.

You know, the devil does not have cloven feet. The devil wears boots and is very beautiful. He is very beautiful.

GAS CHAMBER: DEAD ROOM

Here we are at the “holding rooms” referred to as the “dead rooms.” You would obviously be dead by now. This is where they would drag your body and you would just lie in here with the other dead bodies awaiting cremation.



CREMATORIUM

Next, you would be dragged in this the cremation area. And as you can see, there were a whole row of these ovens that were used very actively here at Dachau. This is where you would end up. This is literally the end of the line.

The hooks and pulleys that you see were used to open and close the oven doors. However, when the bodies started to stack up, the guards would hang the corpses from these ropes until an oven would open up.

Your corpse would then go in here ... and your ashes would go out the back.

Very tidy Very neat and tidy.





Dachau's Crematorium

¹ “That Was Dachau 1933-1944,” Dr. Stanislav Zamecnik, *le cherche midi*, 2004, pp. 172, 287, 289-290; “Holocaust: Dachau and Sachsenhausen,” Artsmagic Ltd, Chronos Productions, 2006, 35:00.

² “That Was Dachau 1933-1944,” Dr. Stanislav Zamecnik, *le cherche midi*, 2004, pp. 172, 287, 289-290; “Holocaust: Dachau and Sachsenhausen,” Artsmagic Ltd, Chronos Productions, 2006, 35:00.