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# Transcript of Speech by Kohl at Bitburg Base

*BITBURG, West Germany, May 5 (AP) — Following is a transcript of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's speech today at the United States Air Base at Bitburg, as recorded and translated by The Associated Press:*

Mr. President, members of the U.S. armed forces, members of the Bundeswehr, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear American friends, fellow countrymen.

It is not often that the link between the past, present and future of our country reaches as vividly as during these hours at Bitburg.

A few minutes ago, the President of the United States of America and I paid homage in the military cemetery to the dead buried there and thus to all victims of war and tyranny, to the dead and persecuted of all nations.

Our visit to the soldiers' graves here in Bitburg was not an easy one. It could not but arouse deep feelings. For me it meant first and foremost deep sorrow and grief at the infinite suffering that the war and totalitarianism inflicted on nations, sorrow and grief that will never cease.

## **A Gesture of Reconciliation**

Stemming from them is our commitment to peace and freedom as the supreme goal of our political actions. And the visit to the graves in Bitburg is also a reaffirmation and a widely visible and widely felt gesture of reconciliation between our peoples, the people of the United States of America and us Germans, reconciliation which does not dismiss the past but enables us to overcome it by acting together.

Finally, our presence here testifies to our

friendship, which has proved to be steadfast and reliable and is based on our belief in shared values.

I thank you, Mr. President, both on behalf of the whole German people, and I thank you very personally as friend, for visiting the graves with me. I believe that many of our German people understand this expression of deep friendship, and that it forbodes a good future for our nations.

The town of Bitburg witnessed at first hand the collapse of the Third Reich. It suffered the year 1945. It was part of the reconstruction in the years of reconciliation. For 25 years now, Bitburg has been the site of joint ceremonies in which American, French and German soldiers and citizens of this town and region commemorate the victims of the war, and time and again affirm their friendship and their determination to preserve peace jointly. Here, close and friendly relations have evolved in a special way in these years between the U.S. forces and the German population.

Bitburg can be regarded as a symbol of reconciliation and of German-American friendship.

## **Helpers, Partners, Allies**

Members of the Bundeswehr, most of you have been born since May 8, 1945. You have not yourselves experienced the war and tyranny in this country. You grew up in the years in which we built our republic, at a time when friendship re-emerged and developed between us and the American nation. You got to know our American friends as helpers, as partners and allies.

Days like this are a suitable way of reminding our people's young generation in particular that

this development, so favorable for us, was not a matter of course and that the preservation of peace and freedom requires our very personal dedication.

You, the members of the U.S. forces in the Federal Republic of Germany, serve your country, the United States of America, and our republic alike.

The security of the Federal Republic of Germany is closely linked to the partnership and friendship of the United States of America. We know what we owe you and your families. We also know that serving overseas means sacrifice for many of you. Let me assure you that you are welcome guests in our country, in the Federal Republic of Germany. Do not let a small and insignificant minority give you a different impression. We sincerely welcome you here as friends, as allies, as guarantors of our security.

## **Armed Forces' Close Ties**

Relations have developed over many years between the U.S. armed forces and the Bundeswehr and are closer than ever before. I should like to thank you, the American and German soldiers, for this partnership we almost take for granted. It strengthens our joint determination to defend peace and freedom of our nations, and this partnership — as I wish expressly to state here at Bitburg — thus is a source of mutual understanding of our peoples, generating many personal friendships.

I wish the members of the U.S. forces, I wish our soldiers of the Federal Armed Forces, I wish for us all that together we make our contribution to peace and freedom of our country and of the world — and may God's blessing be with us.

NYT 5/4/85

M A L Q U I / T    A N D    M O N C R I E F

CERTIFIED SHORTHAND REPORTERS

April 26, 1985

White House  
Speech Writer's Office  
Washington D.C. 20500

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

As per my phone conversation with the Media Liaison Branch  
of the White House, I am forwarding my editorial letter.

Sincerely Your,



Jack W. Moncrief

MALQUIST & MONCRIEF  
2100 Northrop Avenue, Bldg. 1200  
Sacramento, CA 95825  
(916) 921-1397

JM/gs  
Enclosure



M A L Q U I / T AND M O N C R I E F

CERTIFIED SHORTHAND REPORTERS

April 26, 1985

THE SACRAMENTO UNION  
301 Capitol Mall  
Sacramento, CA 95812

ATTN: BRUCE WINTERS

Re: Editorial

Dear Mr. Winters:

As a historical note in defense of President Reagan visiting the military cemetery at Bitburg, any suspicions about the branch of the army from which these buried SS Soldiers came, were cleared by the evening news. The camera zoomed in on an SS grave marker which depicted "SS PR GR". In military jargon, this stands for SCHUTZSTAFFELN PANZERGRUPPE.

This was a crack combat outfit that had about as much involvement in the "Final Solution" as did the German U-Boat Crews. They abhorred civilian population control and policing duties that were carried out by that sinister SS group, the Totenkoph, created by Himmler, that the general public associates the SS with.

The Totenkoph was despised even within the German Army itself, including the SS Panzergruppe divisions.

When a history book is opened for scrutiny, all the pages should be read.

Sincerely,



Jack W. Moncrief

JM/gs

CC: White House  
Speech Writer's Office  
Washington D.C. 20500

Mrs. Charles P. Sachs  
6717 CHISHOLM DRIVE  
BALTIMORE, MD. 21207

April 15, 1985

*pro*

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Mr. President:

~~This writer has lost both parents and many relatives in the German holocaust. I left Germany in 1939 and have not set foot on German soil since, fully conscious of the fact that the new generation cannot be blamed for the Nazi mass murders.~~

Still, there are too many religious and political fanatics in this world, believing that killing men, women and children will solve their problems. ~~Lebanon, Cambodia, Iran, Armenia, S.E. Asia, are a few of the troubled places.~~

Visiting a former concentration camp on your trip to Germany would show the world that ~~America cares and still deploras the senseless killing of millions of innocent people.~~

Sincerely,

*Ruth A. Sachs*  
Ruth A. Sachs

April 13, 1985

President Ronald Reagan  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Dear President Reagan,

Your decision to place a wreath in a Nazi cemetery was the right one for many reasons.

As President it was right for the large view to the future. It lays a foundation stone for Peace through conciliation.

Politically, it was right because it shows respect for a staunch ally.

As a Christian it is right because it shows charity. Christians are called to forgive. ~~Without forgiveness we are chained to the past. In forgiving we recognize our mutual humanity.~~ In forgiving enemies we invite forgiveness and create a hopeful ambient for positive interaction.

For a long while we have been burdened by the horror of the holocaust. The Jewish outcry, their pain, is deeply understandable. The allied soldiers whose lives were deeply disrupted, those who were disabled, and who saw their comrades die, have suffered great anguish.

~~It is now time for a courageous use of that horror in a constructive hopeful giant step toward peace.~~ Let us remember that many nations have had their holocausts, their moral lapses, their Bangladeshes, their desaparecidos, their Bataan death marches, their MyLais.

It is time for world neighbors to lay down their burden of past injustices and to create a climate for PEACE.

Sincerely,

Mary G. Kopy  
1741 Crestwood Lane  
Pasadena, CA 91102



ROBERT E. BULLARD  
BOX 276  
CHAPTICO, MARYLAND 20621

April 17, 1985

President Ronald Reagan  
White House  
Washington, D. C. 20006

Mr. President:

I applaud your decision to visit a German war dead cemetery. The men I served with in the campaigns from Normandy to Austria would not resent your action. I don't remember the Jewish G.I.s I soldiered with showing this synthetic hate for the men who fought us.

In December, 1944, I lay on a dark, cold floor in the hospital at Reims, surrounded by Germans with trench foot; toes black and dropping off. It was "Bulge" time. On April 29, 1945, I watched our lead tank take a hit on the Autobahn-Dachau overpass. A single squad held up our whole armored division for an hour. The last day of the war I buried a young SS man near Wasserburg. Months later, home, with the mails restored, I wrote his family in Austria, telling them where he was buried. He had been drafted in January, killed in May. These men, too, were Hitler's victims.

The middle-east mentality may not understand you. but those who served on the line, those now serving in Germany, and the Germans of to-day will understand and appreciate your position.

Thank you for keeping decency alive

Respectfully



ROBERT E. BULLARD  
(then Sergeant, now  
Captain, Infantry, retired)

Monika Roberts  
1285 Autumn Wood Circle  
Manchester, Missouri 63011  
Phone: (314) 391-6917  
April 18, 1985

(314) 895-6845 (off.)

until Weiss.

Then from Sun. night  
on —

President Ronald Reagan  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Reagan:

I note with interest that the press is attacking you in regard to your planned visit to the Bitburg Cemetary in Germany.

As a fellow American (I immigrated to the United States 23 years ago), I feel compelled to tell you a story that may offset some of this criticism.

My father, Adolf Dressler, is buried at Bitburg. He was a farmer in his late thirties, not a member of the Nazi Party, when he was drafted into the infantry from our small community close to Koblenz. During his tour of duty, he saw action initially on the Russian Front and missed the Leningrad Siege by just a few weeks.

As the war was coming to an end, he was assigned to an infantry regiment fighting in Luxembourg.

On January 19, 1945 (see attached copy of grave marker), he was killed in Luxembourg. A nineteen year old German soldier wrapped my father's body in a blanket and carried him on his back for three days to assure him a burial on German soil. Through the young soldier's help, my father's remains were located several years later and moved to Bitburg.

I consider it an honor that my President plans to visit the last resting place of my father.

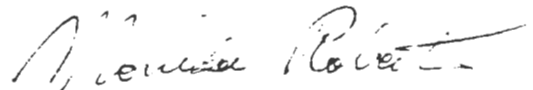


President Ronald Reagan  
April 18, 1985  
Page Two

Only a handful of SS-Troopers are buried at Bitburg. The rest of the graves are those of many Germans like my father, who were forced to serve under the Nazi regime.

If this correspondence can be of any assistance in supporting your visit, feel free to make reference or have your staff contact me for further details.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ronald Reagan".

cc: Mr. Larry Speakes  
Press Secretary  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Senator John C. Danforth  
490 SROB  
Washington, D.C. 20510

X7610  
12/28

#94

Benjamin

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

AFTER RECENTLY BECOMING A BAT-MITZVAH, I HAVE SUDDENLY BEEN FACED WITH THE HARSH REALITIES OF BEING A JEW. I HAVE REALIZED AND COME TO GRIPS WITH THE FACT THAT THIS IS A NON-JEWISH WORLD. THIS HAS PRIMARILY FOCUSED MANY OF MY RELIGIOUS INTERESTS ON THE HOLOCAUST.

THE OTHER DAY, DURING A DISCUSSION IN MY SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS, I BROUGHT UP WHAT I THOUGHT WAS AN INTERESTING POINT REGARDING YOUR FORTH COMING TRIP TO GERMANY. I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE IT WITH YOU, AS A POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO THE CONTROVERSY THAT HAS ARISEN.

ALTHOUGH I UNDERSTAND YOUR POSITION, I CANNOT BRING MYSELF TO AGREE WITH YOUR SOLUTION. I DON'T FEEL IT WILL AVOID MORE

CONFLICT WITH THE SURVIVORS OF CONCENTRATION CAMPS AND THE JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS WHO ALSO DISAGREE WITH YOUR DECISION. I HAVE READ THAT YOU HAVE TRIED TO OVERCOME THE PROTESTS BY ALSO VISITING A CONCENTRATION CAMP. WHEN THAT DID NOT STILL THE PROTESTS, YOU THEN SAID YOU WOULD LAY THE WREATH IN THE CEMETERY IN HONOR OF THE INNOCENT GERMANS. HOWEVER, THE PEOPLE BURIED THERE ARE UNKNOWN SOLDIERS. HOW DO YOU KNOW WHICH SOLDIERS WERE INNOCENT AND WHICH WERE S.S. MEMBERS? ALTHOUGH IT WAS VERY CONSIDERATE OF YOU, IT HAS STILL LEFT MANY PEOPLE UNSATISFIED.

SINCE YOUR OTHER APPROACHES WERE UNSUCCESSFUL, MIGHT I RESPECTFULLY SUGGEST THAT IT WOULD BE FITTING THAT YOU LAY THE WREATH IN HONOR OF THE FUTURE OF GERMANY. THIS WILL HELP TO PLACE THE PAST BEHIND THEM AND WILL ALLOW GERMANY TO DEAL WITH THE BITTER MEMORIES OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THEIR COUNTRY. ON THE OTHER HAND,



IT WILL NOT DEGRADE THE FEELINGS OF ALL THOSE JEWS WHO SUFFERED THROUGH THE MANY YEARS OF TORTURE. WE MUST ALL REMEMBER SO THAT IT WILL NEVER OCCUR AGAIN.

I HOPE THAT YOU AGREE WITH MY SOLUTION AND ARE ABLE TO PUT IT TO GOOD USE. I FEEL IT WILL SATISFY ALL WHO ARE IN DISAGREEMENT WITH YOU, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO ARE NOT.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.



January 1973

# Reader's Digest<sup>60</sup>

MA

Summitry and the Prospects for Peace . . .	William E. Griffith	49
The Miracle of the Ginny . . .	"Ginny"	55
Why Food Prices Keep Rising . . .	James E. Roper	61
For Love of Silas . . .	Woman's Day	66
It's Time to Face the Energy Crisis . . .	Ronald Schiller	71
I Am Joe's Hand . . .	J. D. Ratcliff	79
Ordeal in the Snow . . .	Drama in Real Life	84
How to Drive Your Child Sane . . .	Life	89
Those Rolling Homes-Away-From-Home . . .	Report to Consumers	93
"Just Call Old Mary!" . . .	Christopher Lucas	100
The War on the American Family . . .	Lester Velie	106
Truce in the Forest . . .	First Person Award	111
If You Want Help on Your Income-Tax Return . . .	Bill Surface	115
Challenges to America:		
I. From the Counterculture . . .	René Dubos	121
II. Toward a New Springtime . . .	Lyndon Baines Johnson	123
Dr. Baird's Double Life . . .	Involved Americans	127
Being a Working Wife: How Well Does It Work? . . .	Money	131
The Canal That Couldn't Be Built . . .	Great Moments in U.S. History	136
Age of Shovelry . . .	Cartoon Feature	142
CPR—The Lifesaving Technique Everyone Should Know . . .	Family Safety	144
What's Needed to Defend America? . . .	Hanson W. Baldwin	150
I Thought We'd Take the Din Out of Dinner . . .	Star	157
Machiavelli: The Man and the Reputation . . .	Ernest O. Hauser	164
We've Got to Get Working on the Railroad . . .	Harper's Magazine	173
Why Husbands Cheat on Their Wives . . .	Woman's Day	189

Special Feature

#### AFRICAN PROFILE:

- I. Under the Silent Sky . . .  
    "The Tree Where Man Was Born" 197
- II. The Rocky Road to Freedom . . . David Reed 211

Have You an Amusing Anecdote? 8—Behind the Lines, 11—Press Section, 17—Personal Glimpses, 23—Long Live the Book! 27—Points to Ponder, 35—Sickle Cell Anemia: A Neglected Killer, 39—Life in These United States, 77—Laughter, 98—Word Power, 119—Quotable Quotes, 126—Picturesque Speech, 135—Humor in Uniform, 169  
News From the World of Medicine, 181

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# Truce in the Forest

*It was Christmas Eve, and the last, desperate German offensive of World War II raged around our tiny cabin. Suddenly, there was a knock on the door . . .*

A Reader's Digest  
"First Person" Award

BY FRITZ VINCKEN

WHEN we heard the knock on our door that Christmas Eve in 1944, neither Mother nor I had the slightest inkling of the quiet miracle that lay in store for us.

I was 12 then, and we were living in a small cottage in the Hürtgen Forest near the German-Belgian border. Father had stayed at the cottage on hunting weekends before the war; when Allied bombers partly destroyed our hometown of Aachen, he sent us to live there. He had been ordered into the civil-defense fire guard in the border town of Monschau, four miles away.

"You'll be safe in the woods," he had told me. "Take care of Mother. Now you're the man of the family."

But, nine days before Christmas, Field Marshal von Rundstedt had launched the last, desperate German offensive of the war, and now, as I went to the door, the Battle of the Bulge was raging all around us. We heard the incessant booming of field guns; planes soared continuously overhead; at night, searchlights stabbed through the darkness. Thousands of Allied and German soldiers were fighting and dying nearby.

When that first knock came, Mother quickly blew out the can-

dles; then, as I went to answer it, she stepped ahead of me and pushed open the door. Outside, like a storm, two steel-helmeted men. One of them spoke to Mother in a language we did not understand, pointing to a third man lying in the snow. She realized before I did that these were American soldiers. *Enemies!*

Mother stood silent, motionless, her hand on my shoulder. They were armed and could have forced their entrance, yet they stood there and asked with their eyes. And the wounded man seemed more dead than alive. "Kommt rein," Mother said finally. "Come in." The soldiers carried their comrade inside and stretched him out on my bed.

None of them understood German. Mother tried French, and one of the soldiers could converse in that language. As Mother went to look after the wounded man, she said to me,

"Bring in a bucket of snow." Soon I was rubbing their blue feet with snow.

That night the wounded man, a blond fellow we called Harry, his friend, a thin one we called Robin, Harry, the wounded one, was now sleeping on my bed, his face as white as the snow outside. They had been in the forest and had wandered in the last three days, looking for the Americans, hiding from the Germans. They hadn't shaved, but still, without their heavy coats, they looked merely like big boys. And

that was the way Mother began to treat them.

Now Mother said to me, "Go get Hermann. And bring six potatoes."

This was a serious departure from our pre-Christmas plans. Hermann was the plump rooster (named after portly Hermann Göring, Hitler's No. 2, for whom Mother had little affection) that we had been fattening for weeks in the hope that Father would be home for Christmas. But, some hours before, when it was obvious that Father would not make it, Mother had decided that Hermann should live a few more days, in case Father could get home for New Year's. Now she had changed her mind again: Hermann would serve an immediate, pressing purpose.

While Jim and I helped with the cooking, Robin took care of Harry. He had a bullet through his upper leg, and had almost bled to death. Mother tore a bedsheet into long strips for bandages.

Soon, the tempting smell of roast chicken permeated our room. I was setting the table when once again there came a knock at the door. Expecting to find more lost Americans, I opened the door without hesita-

"Germans!"

I was paralyzed with fear. Although still a child, I knew the harsh law: sheltering enemy soldiers constituted high treason. We could all be shot! Mother was frightened, too. Her face was white, but she



stepped outside and said, quietly, "*Fröhliche Weihnachten.*" The soldiers wished her a Merry Christmas, too.

"We have lost our regiment and would like to wait for daylight," explained the corporal. "Can we rest here?"

"Of course," Mother replied, with a calmness born of panic. "You can also have a fine, warm meal and eat till the pot is empty."

The Germans smiled as they sniffed the aroma through the half-open door. "But," Mother added firmly, "we have three other guests, whom you may not consider friends." Now her voice was suddenly sterner than I'd ever heard it before. "This is Christmas Eve, and there will be no shooting here."

"Who's inside?" the corporal demanded. "*Amerikaner?*"

Mother looked at each frost-chilled face. "Listen," she said slowly. "You could be my sons, and so could those in there. A boy with a gunshot wound, fighting for his life. His two friends—lost like you and just as hungry and exhausted as you are. This one night," she turned to the corporal and raised her voice a little, "this Christmas night, let us forget about killing."

The corporal stared at her. There were two or three endless seconds of silence. Then Mother put an end to indecision. "Enough talking!" she ordered and clapped her hands sharply. "Please put your weapons here on the woodpile—and hurry up before the others eat the dinner!"

Dazedly, the four soldiers placed their arms on the pile of firewood just inside the door: three carbines, a light machine gun and two bazookas. Meanwhile, Mother was speaking French rapidly to Jim. He said something in English, and to my amazement I saw the American boys, too, turn their weapons over to Mother.

Now, as Germans and Americans tensely rubbed elbows in the small room, Mother was really on her mettle. Never losing her smile, she tried to find a seat for everyone. We had only three chairs, but Mother's bed was big, and on it she placed two of the newcomers side by side with Jim and Robin.

Despite the strained atmosphere, Mother went right on preparing dinner. But Hermann wasn't going to grow any bigger, and now there were four more mouths to feed. "Quick," she whispered to me, "get more potatoes and some oats. These boys are hungry, and a starving man is an angry one."

While foraging in the storage room, I heard Harry moan. When I returned, one of the Germans had put on his glasses to inspect the American's wound. "Do you belong to the medical corps?" Mother asked him. "No," he answered. "But I studied medicine at Heidelberg until a few months ago." Thanks to the cold, he told the Americans in what sounded like fairly good English, Harry's wound hadn't become infected. "He is suffering from a severe loss of blood," he explained to

Mother. "What he needs is rest and nourishment."

Relaxation was now beginning to replace suspicion. Even to me, all the soldiers looked very young as we [redacted] Heinz and Will [redacted] both from Cologne, were 16. The German corporal, at 23, was the oldest of them all. From his food bag he drew out a bottle of red wine, and Heinz managed to find a loaf of rye bread. Mother cut that in small pieces to be served with the dinner; half the wine, however, she put away—"for the wounded boy."

Then Mother said grace. I noticed that there were tears in her eyes as she said the old, familiar words, "*Komm, Herr Jesus.* Be our guest." And as I looked around the table, I saw tears, too, in the eyes of the battle-weary soldiers, boys again, some from America, some from Germany, all far from home.

Just before midnight, Mother went to the doorstep and asked us to join her to look up at the Star of Bethlehem. We all stood beside her except Harry, who was sleeping. For all of us during that moment of silence, looking at the brightest star in the heavens, the war was a distant, almost-forgotten thing.

[redacted] Harry woke in the early hours, and swallowed some broth that Mother fed him. With the dawn, it was apparent that he was becoming stronger. Mother now

made him an invigorating drink from our one egg, the rest of the corporal's wine and some sugar. Everyone else had oatmeal. Afterward, two poles and Mother's best tablecloth were fashioned into a stretcher for Harry.

[redacted] the [redacted] the way to find their way back to their lines. Looking over Jim's map, the corporal pointed out a stream. "Continue along this creek," he said, "and you will find the 1st Army rebuilding its forces on its upper course." The medical student relayed the information in English.

"Why don't we head for Monschau?" Jim had the student ask. "*Neini!*" the corporal exclaimed. "We've retaken Monschau."

Now Mother gave them all back their weapons. "Be careful, boys," she said. "I want you to get home someday where you belong. God bless you."

[redacted] When I returned inside, Mother had brought out the old family Bible. I glanced over her shoulder. The book was open to the Christmas story, the Birth in the Manger and how the Wise Men came from afar bearing their gifts. Her finger was tracing the last line from Matthew 2:12: ". . . they departed into their own country another way."

*Happiness is a way station between too much and too little.* —Channing Pollock

against

357 Tustin Way  
Ventura, California  
April 12, 1985

Dear President Reagan,

Forgive? yes, of course.

As a Christian one is commanded  
to forgive. But forget? We  
should never forget mankind's  
potential for evil.

As a Christian and a  
teacher of American history, I  
urge you to visit a German  
military cemetery and also  
Dachau next month.

Sincerely,

Diana & Douglas



BERNSTEIN  
Sixty Woody Lane  
Fairfield, CT 06430

April 13, 1985

Mr. Ronald Reagan  
% The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President,

As a life long Democrat who changed his vote to Republican last November, as a deeply committed Jew, as a veteran of World War II, and as a proud American citizen; I write to you protesting your decision to visit the graves of Nazi soldiers and ignore the memorials and graves of those murdered by them.

There can be no rationale of a man of good will to take this action. Rather, it should be the other way around. What good or other positive effect can be served by acknowledging the memories of those who caused the greatest pain and suffering inflicted upon my people in particular and the nations of the world in general?

As the leader of our nation, you are unwisely and misadvisedly giving your approval to forces of evil that darkened our planet for twelve terrible years.

I urge you, Mr. President, to reconsider your decision and eliminate a visit to Nazi cemeteries from your itinerary completely, to pay your respects the victims rather than the oppressors. Please do not tarnish your reputation nor that of our beloved country by this ill advised act.

Respectfully

Morton H. Bernstein



1819 N. Curson Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90046  
April 12, 1985

Honorable Ronald Reagan  
President, United States  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

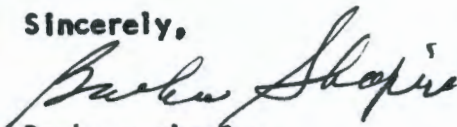
My two brothers were in the U.S. Army, and fought in World War II. One of my brothers was honorably discharged when the war ended with the defeat of the German army in May, 1945. My other brother was killed fighting the Nazis.

I must confess to deep shock and outrage at your stated intention to honor the German war dead. The blood of the Americans who were killed by that Nazi war machine must cry out against your honoring their murderers.

Please, sir, do reconsider. If you are unwilling to commemorate the millions of innocent civilian victims of the systematic Nazi terror, do not balance that unwillingness with a laudatory gesture toward the military machine of Germany which has already plunged the world into two conflagrations.

I would appreciate a response to my plea.

Sincerely,

  
Barbara Shapiro

41 Prescott St  
Everett Mass.  
02149

April 8-1985

Dear Mr. President

I think it is very  
wrong for you to visit  
the memorial services while  
your visit in Germany. I  
lost my brother in world  
war II and am sure his  
grave could be visited by  
Americans in Italy.

Sincerely  
Mrs. Mildred Suppa



Albert Rosenthal, M.D.

24610 HARDING  
OAK PARK, MICHIGAN 48237  
547-9363

April 13, 1985

President Ronald Reagan  
White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Reagan,

I am writing this letter  
to protest your planned visit to a  
military cemetery in West Germany.  
This action is an insult not only to the  
American people, but to freedom  
loving people throughout the world.  
We do not regard this act in the  
"spirit of reconciliation" as you do.  
Since you represent all the people  
of the United States, please do not  
honor the German soldier of World War II.  
-- this is reprehensible in our judgement.  
We hope, Mr. President, you will listen  
to the conscience of fellow Americans  
and have the courage to stand up and  
be counted.

Sincerely,  
Albert Rosenthal M.D.



ALFRED B. UDOW, Ph.D.  
3 BLY COURT  
GREAT NECK, N. Y. 11023

April 13, 1985

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Reagan:

May I add my voice to the protest against what I consider to be your ill-advised decision to honor the Nazi war dead on your upcoming visit to Germany and to ignore the Allied war dead during that visit.

I understand your wish to honor the soldiers on the other side who were merely doing their duty in trying to kill as many Americans as they could, but I cannot understand the statement attributed to you which imply that there are scarcely any individuals left ~~WERE~~ who were involved in World War II.

Mr. President, there are still millions of American veterans alive, myself included, who feel insulted by your reported decision.

Please reconsider. How about a visit -- no matter how brief to the tomb of the unknown soldier in Paris during your visit to France? The French were our allies in that war, you might remember even if you did not take part in it.

Sincerely,

Alfred B. Udow

April 17, 1985

Ms. Anne Higgins  
Special Assistant to the President  
and Director of Correspondence  
The White House  
Washington D. C.

Personal and Confidential

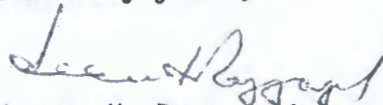
Dear Ms. Higgins:

I was very pleased to learn of the President's reconsideration of his European stops. As a long supporter of the President through my efforts with U.R.F.C. in Los Angeles County, I was dismayed with his initial program to honor German war dead, including members of the infamous S.S., while ignoring both the concentration camps and the American war dead.

The President's deep felt concern for the victims of the Holocaust is well-known - (let alone our own military dead), but the misreading of his intentions in Europe would have given comfort to Nazis everywhere!

The President's correction of what obviously was a staff blunder has been well received but I do hope that he'll find time to honor our own war dead by visiting an American cemetery, too.

Sincerely yours,

  
Herman H. Rappaport

P.S. If there is anything on the West Coast I might do for you, please let me know. I'll be attending a Department of Commerce Private Sector Advisory meeting in Washington on May 9th.

HHR:bjs



# ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA

WESTCHESTER REGION

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Arnold Spicehandler

April 19, 1985

President Ronald Reagan  
White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Reagan,

Despite the misunderstandings and difficulties concerning your upcoming trip to Germany we express full confidence and trust in your stated intentions to do the very best for the United States.

We know that your negotiations with representatives of the German government will result in benefits for both nations. We are confident that the resolution of the misunderstandings concerning arrangements for the trip to Germany will be resolved and that the effectiveness of your leadership will continue to unite the free world.

With respect and appreciation,

Arnold Spicehandler  
Regional Director

as/bs

*May we receive - when time permits - your message so that we can relay it to the 4000+ members. Wishing you continued success -*

*A.S.*

Send to: KK

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

TO: ~~David Chew~~

FROM: **KATHY OSBORNE**  
**Personal Secretary**  
**to the President**

DATE: 4-26-85

As we agreed, I won't show this to RR before we leave.

However, Mrs. Loeb certainly has a way with words. Do you think it would be worth passing a copy of her letter (editorial) on to the speechwriters regarding the Bitburg ceremony?

there is support many. Note the After listening to owling about your at this might be knowledge.

*Nackey*  
Nackey

NSL:Mrs. S. Raymond  
Enclosure

The Union Leader  NEW HAMPSHIRE'S DAILY NEWSPAPER

MANCHESTER, N.H. 03105 · 603 668-4321

 **SUNDAY NEWS**

William Loeb, President and Publisher, 1946-1981  
Nackey Scripps Loeb, President and Publisher

"There Is Nothing So Powerful As Truth"



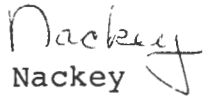
April 23, 1985

President Ronald Reagan  
#16691  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ron:

Just to let you know that there is support for your scheduled trip to Germany. Note the enclosed front page editorial. After listening to all the hyenas of the media howling about your insensitivity, I thought that this might be appreciated. Don't bother to acknowledge.

Sincerely,

  
Nackey

NSL:Mrs. S. Raymond  
Enclosure

## An Editorial

# Meaning of a Wreath

When we are asked to hate the sin but love the sinner, it's not easy, as President Reagan is finding out.

Visiting the graves of German war dead is an act of respect for young lives lost in combat. It is not — as the mind-molders of the media would have us believe — an acceptance of the horrors of Nazism.

For young men to die in combat is a tragedy, no matter their nationality. German mothers wept too, for death does not discriminate between people of different races. A wreath laid in a German cemetery in no way justifies the evils of aggression, Nazi or otherwise.

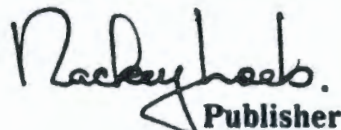
Incidentally, 99 percent of those in the Bitburg Cemetery were not SS troops.

The lessons of history work very well if we remember the evils of the Hitler regime. Hitler's strength was due in large part to a free world that ignored and condoned his early advances until the whole world was forced into that most bloody war. Today, as aggression once more spreads across the world, we had better remember that lesson.

A wreath at a cemetery doesn't mean we've forgiven the forces of Nazism or forgotten the victims of their crimes. It doesn't mean that the Americans who fought and died to stop the Nazi onslaught did so in vain.

Rather, it means that we express sorrow and respect for lives lost in a terrible war. The message of that wreath should be that all mankind suffers when despots seek to enslave and all mankind should pay respect to lives wasted and lost on the world's battlefields.

Nackey Loeb, Publisher

  
Publisher

THE UNION LEADER, MANCHESTER, N.H. — Monday, April 22, 1985



October 18, 1965

JDP:

Attached is the checking report of Fritz Vincken's piece "Fröhliche Weihnachten, Yank!"

As you suggested, the only possible way of checking it was to go and see the author's mother, Mrs. Elisabeth Vincken, as rapidly as possible, in order to get the story from her. This is how I proceeded:

The day after we received the story, I left for Aachen (not Essen, as stated in the telephone interview) where Mrs. Vincken lives. First I tried to find out whether her son had been in touch with her regarding his story. Mrs. Vincken very happily showed me dozens of pictures of her son, daughter-in-law and grandchild, and read a great many of her son's letters to me. Only once, in a letter dating back to last spring, does he mention their "peculiar Christmas in Hürtgen Forest with those German and American soldiers under our roof, which my American friends think absolutely extraordinary." Mrs. Vincken did not give the sentence a second thought. She cannot understand people who would want to hear about "that awful war." It is quite certain that Fritz Vincken did not send his mother the text, nor did he ask her to write him about it. Mrs. Vincken is a very simple and motherly woman and entirely trustworthy.

Then I asked her to tell me the story. She did so in one sentence: "We were in Hürtgen Forest, just my little boy and I and we were prepared for a very lonely Christmas when those poor American boys, dressed as soldiers, and those poor German boys, also dressed as soldiers came and spent the night with us." The details came very slowly and hesitatingly and without chronological order during the following two hours. Mrs. Vincken obviously had never thought about that particular Christmas during the last 20 years. But once all the details were put in place, her story resembled her son's entirely, with only two or three little things missing: such as the names of the Germans, the cigars and the Germans telling the Americans which route to take. The only point where mother Vincken's story differs slightly from her son's is the place where the Germans put their weapons. A minor point, really.

From the start Mrs. Vincken told me that neither their cottage, nor Hürtgen Forest were still there. Hürtgen Forest had been badly



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1000

ravaged during the battle of the bulge. After the war it was cut down entirely and made into a resettlement area for Prussian and Silesian refugees. Since Hürtgen Forest bordered the Siegfried line, it was mined to the hilt by the Germans, which is another reason why it had to be cut down. Mrs. Vincken's statements were later confirmed by several Belgian and German customs officials, our driver, the Monschau tourist office and the priest of Mütznich.

In the early afternoon Mrs. Vincken and I rented a car to visit what used to be Hürtgen Forest, in hopes of being able to locate the approximate spot where the cottage stood. The driver was a native of a small village in the Hürtgen Forest and really knew the area well, but he was just as lost as Mrs. Vincken. After three hours of driving and walking and after having crossed the German-Belgian border six or seven times, which was eyed suspiciously by the border guards ("if you have lost something, tell the police Madame") we did locate the approximate spot. A few of the dark-brown timber cottages, looking <sup>like</sup> the Vincken one, have been rebuilt since the war, and they are a characteristic of the Hürtgen region. Mrs. Vincken tried really hard and sincerely, but even the natives of the area are unable to indicate certain spots of what used to be the forest.

After this we drove south, as closely to the railway track as possible. When there was no road left, I walked along the railway track, trying to find the bridge and the creek indicated by the German soldiers in the story. There are two bridges now, but the one which existed during the war had indeed been blown up by the Germans before the Allies reached the Siegfried line. Just a little further on, the creek, which in fact is one of the two upper arms of the Roer river, branches off to the right. The indications therefore are absolutely correct. The railway line is now only used for merchandise trains, but I nevertheless got fined 5.50 Marks for "unauthorized walking on government property."

There can be no doubt but that the Vincken story is true, and it is a beautiful story too.

UN



1467 Braddock Lane  
Penn Wynne, PA 19151

April 14, 1985

311062

The Hon. Ronald Regan  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Regan:

I am writing to you because I am very much disturbed by your reported plans to visit a Nazi cemetery but not a concentration camp when you go to Germany next month.

As a daughter of a veteran who fought in World War II, even while of German heritage myself, I believe the wounds of that war are too fresh to honor the dead who killed so many of our husbands and fathers, not to mention countless others while in the service of a madman. I understand the spirit of reconciliation which prompted the idea, but please understand how painful it will be to so many.

It seems to me that, rather than merely rubbing at old German wounds by visiting a concentration camp, it would be an excellent opportunity to honor those thousands of Jews, "good Germans" and so many of others of different nationalities and creeds who lost their lives in the pursuit of freedom. It is also a good chance for America to remind the world that the concentration camp as an institution for political torture and intimidation is no historical relic. It is alive in the Gulags of the Soviet Union, in the Southeast Asian "reeducation camps," and in numerous South American prisons.

In order to stress our reconciliation with the Germans, many of whom were very young during the war, we really cannot pass over the dark spot in their history, nor would it make any sense to do so. For a defeated nation to rise from its ashes and become a sane, stable member of the European community is no small feat; neither is the fact that they have attempted to rise above their shame.

Every nation, it seems, has a dark stain on its history. Ours is our treatment of our native Americans, the Indians, and, of course, slavery. None of us were around to perpetrate these horrible deeds, yet our nation would be

...e poorer for it were we not to acknowledge our past dishonors,  
and work toward righting internal injustices. So it is  
for our allies as well: to know how far they have come  
as nations, we must know from where they came.

The Germans themselves are prisoners of a new age.  
The dividing of Berlin separates loved ones and countrymen,  
all at the bidding of the new "victors." The history of  
atrocities does not end with Auchwitz and the others;  
it is perpetuated in the greed of nations to take over  
the hearts and minds and resources of other sovereign peoples.  
This should be America's message at a German concentration  
camp: this camp is history; its sufferings engraved on  
the hearts of decent people everywhere. We mourn the dead  
and the unspeakable deeds that were done here. We celebrate  
the courage of those who suffered and died here; of those  
who refused to cooperate, or were themselves imprisoned  
for helping to liberate the Jews (Raoul Wallenberg will  
be in the minds of many). But America says to all who  
suffer today for religious and political freedom: we  
remember you, too. We are on a quest, from where we have  
come, from where Germany has come, to promote the virtues  
of freedom throughout the world.

I thank you for your time, and hope that you will  
give this your earnest consideration.

Sincerely,

Ruth S. Biddison

Ruth S. Biddison



doctor Valerie Stark

published  
1950  
Tel Aviv

From the diary of a (woman)  
physician in Bergen-Belsen

With the early light of dawn the  
new born entered the world. I take the  
small damp body from the nurse... [Several  
women in the room] were recalling memories of  
days past, recounting the stories of their  
deliveries. One young woman blushed  
remembering the sweetness of her wedding

night. I stand astonished by this room  
so full of life and warmth, <sup>For</sup> ~~in~~ this <sup>fallen and</sup> ~~been~~ <sup>murdered</sup>

wooden hut, forsaken and miserable, <sup>(...)</sup> in the  
wind and the rain,  
new life emerges. The mother smiled  
with <sup>pity</sup> compassion at her delicate new born son.

I look at the two of them and I understand  
everything. I understand everything, and  
A new hope settles in my heart.



Today shows that with  
the lesson of history firmly  
in our minds, we can  
turn a new page





January 1973 **Reader's Digest** 60¢ MA

Summitry and the Prospects for Peace . . .	William E. Griffith	49
The Miracle of Ginny . . .	"Ginny"	55
Why Food Prices Keep Rising . . .	James E. Roper	61
For Love of Silas . . .	Woman's Day	66
It's Time to Face the Energy Crisis . . .	Ronald Schiller	71
I Am Joe's Hand . . .	J. D. Ratcliff	79
Ordeal in the Snow . . .	Drama in Real Life	84
How to Drive Your Child Sane . . .	Life	89
Those Rolling Homes-Away-From-Home . . .	Report to Consumers	93
"Just Call Old Mary!" . . .	Christopher Lucas	100
The War on the American Family . . .	Lester Velie	106
Truce in the Forest . . .	First Person Award	111
If You Want Help on Your Income-Tax Return . . .	Bill Surface	115
Challenges to America:		
I. From the Counterculture . . .	René Dubos	121
II. Toward a New Springtime . . .	Lyndon Baines Johnson	123
Dr. Baird's Double Life . . .	Involved Americans	127
Being a Working Wife: How Well Does It Work? . . .	Money	131
The Canal That Couldn't Be Built . . .	Great Moments in U.S. History	136
Age of Shovelry . . .	Cartoon Feature	142
CPR—The Lifesaving Technique Everyone Should Know . . .	Family Safety	144
What's Needed to Defend America? . . .	Hanson W. Baldwin	150
I Thought We'd Take the Din Out of Dinner . . .	Star	157
Machiavelli: The Man and the Reputation . . .	Ernest O. Hauser	164
We've Got to Get Working on the Railroad . . .	Harper's Magazine	173
Why Husbands Cheat on Their Wives . . .	Woman's Day	189

*Special Feature* { AFRICAN PROFILE:  
 I. Under the Silent Sky . . . "The Tree Where Man Was Born" 197  
 II. The Rocky Road to Freedom David Reed 211

Have You an Amusing Anecdote? 8—Behind the Lin's, 11—Press Section, 17—Personal Glimpses, 23—Long Live the Book! 27—Points to Ponder, 35—Sickle Cell Anemia: A Neglected Killer, 39—Life in These United States, 77—Laughter, 98—Word Power, 119—Quotable Quotes, 126—Picturesque Speech, 135—Humor in Uniform, 169  
 News From the World of Medicine, 181

52nd year: Over 29 million copies bought monthly in 13 languages



# Truce in the Forest

*It was Christmas Eve, and the last, desperate German offensive of World War II raged around our tiny cabin. Suddenly, there was a knock on the door...*

A Reader's Digest  
"First Person" Award

BY FRITZ VINCKEN

WHEN we heard the knock on our door that Christmas Eve in 1944, neither Mother nor I had the slightest inkling of the quiet miracle that lay in store for us.

I was 12 then, and we were living in a small cottage in the Hürtgen Forest, near the German-Belgian border. Father had stayed at the cottage on hunting weekends before the war; when Allied bombers partly destroyed our hometown of Aachen, he sent us to live there. He had been ordered into the civil-defense fire guard in the border town of Monschau, four miles away.

"You'll be safe in the woods," he had told me. "Take care of Mother. Now you're the man of the family."

But, nine days before Christmas, Field Marshal von Rundstedt had launched the last, desperate German offensive of the war, and now, as I went to the door, the Battle of the Bulge was raging all around us. We heard the incessant booming of field guns; planes soared continuously overhead; at night, searchlights stabbed through the darkness. Thousands of Allied and German soldiers were fighting and dying nearby.

When that first knock came, Mother quickly blew out the can-



dles; then, as I went to answer it, she stepped ahead of me and pushed open the door. Outside, like phantoms against the snowclad trees, stood two steel-helmeted men. One of them spoke to Mother in a language we did not understand, pointing to a third man lying in the snow. She realized before I did that these were American soldiers. *Enemies!*

Mother stood silent, motionless, her hand on my shoulder. They were armed and could have forced their entrance, yet they stood there and asked with their eyes. And the wounded man seemed more dead than alive. "Kommt rein," Mother said finally. "Come in." The soldiers carried their comrade inside and stretched him out on my bed.

None of them understood German. Mother tried French, and one of the soldiers could converse in that language. As Mother went to look after the wounded man, she said to me, "The fingers of those two are numb. Take off their jackets and boots, and bring in a bucket of snow." Soon I was rubbing their blue feet with snow.

We learned that the stocky, dark-haired fellow was Jim; his friend, tall and slender, was Robin. Harry, the wounded one, was now sleeping on my bed, his face as white as the snow outside. They'd lost their battalion and had wandered in the forest for three days, looking for the Americans, hiding from the Germans. They hadn't shaved, but still, without their heavy coats, they looked merely like big boys. And

that was the way Mother began to treat them.

Now Mother said to me, "Go get Hermann. And bring six potatoes."

This was a serious departure from our pre-Christmas plans. Hermann was the plump rooster (named after portly Hermann Göring, Hitler's No. 2, for whom Mother had little affection) that we had been fattening for weeks in the hope that Father would be home for Christmas. But, some hours before, when it was obvious that Father would not make it, Mother had decided that Hermann should live a few more days, in case Father could get home for New Year's. Now she had changed her mind again: Hermann would serve an immediate, pressing purpose.

While Jim and I helped with the cooking, Robin took care of Harry. He had a bullet through his upper leg, and had almost bled to death. Mother tore a bedsheet into long strips for bandages.

Soon, the tempting smell of roast chicken permeated our room. I was setting the table when once again there came a knock at the door. Expecting to find more lost Americans, I opened the door without hesitation. There stood four soldiers, wearing uniforms quite familiar to me after five years of war. They were *Wehrmacht*—Germans!

I was paralyzed with fear. Although still a child, I knew the harsh law: sheltering enemy soldiers constituted high treason. We could all be shot! Mother was frightened, too. Her face was white, but she



stepped outside and said, quietly, "*Fröhliche Weihnachten.*" The soldiers wished her a Merry Christmas, too.

"We have lost our regiment and would like to wait for daylight," explained the corporal. "Can we rest here?"

"Of course," Mother replied, with a calmness born of panic. "You can also have a fine, warm meal and eat till the pot is empty."

The Germans smiled as they sniffed the aroma through the half-open door. "But," Mother added firmly, "we have three other guests, whom you may not consider friends." Now her voice was suddenly sterner than I'd ever heard it before. "This is Christmas Eve, and there will be no shooting here."

"Who's inside?" the corporal demanded. "*Amerikaner?*"

Mother looked at each frost-chilled face. "Listen," she said slowly. "You could be my sons, and so could those in there. A boy with a gunshot wound, fighting for his life. His two friends—lost like you and just as hungry and exhausted as you are. This one night," she turned to the corporal and raised her voice a little, "this Christmas night, let us forget about killing."

The corporal stared at her. There were two or three endless seconds of silence. Then Mother put an end to indecision. "Enough talking!" she ordered and clapped her hands sharply. "Please put your weapons here on the woodpile—and hurry up before the others eat the dinner!"

Dazedly, the four soldiers placed their arms on the pile of firewood just inside the door: three carbines, a light machine gun and two bazookas. Meanwhile, Mother was speaking French rapidly to Jim. He said something in English, and to my amazement I saw the American boys, too, turn their weapons over to Mother.

Now, as Germans and Americans tensely rubbed elbows in the small room, Mother was really on her mettle. Never losing her smile, she tried to find a seat for everyone. We had only three chairs, but Mother's bed was big, and on it she placed two of the newcomers side by side with Jim and Robin.

Despite the strained atmosphere, Mother went right on preparing dinner. But Hermann wasn't going to grow any bigger, and now there were four more mouths to feed. "Quick," she whispered to me, "get more potatoes and some oats. These boys are hungry, and a starving man is an angry one."

While foraging in the storage room, I heard Harry moan. When I returned, one of the Germans had put on his glasses to inspect the American's wound. "Do you belong to the medical corps?" Mother asked him. "No," he answered. "But I studied medicine at Heidelberg until a few months ago." Thanks to the cold, he told the Americans in what sounded like fairly good English, Harry's wound hadn't become infected. "He is suffering from a severe loss of blood," he explained to

Mother. "What he needs is rest and nourishment."

Relaxation was now beginning to replace suspicion. Even to me, all the soldiers looked very young as we sat there together. Heinz and Willi, both from Cologne, were 16. The German corporal, at 23, was the oldest of them all. From his food bag he drew out a bottle of red wine, and Heinz managed to find a loaf of rye bread. Mother cut that in small pieces to be served with the dinner; half the wine, however, she put away—"for the wounded boy."

Then Mother said grace. I noticed that there were tears in her eyes as she said the old, familiar words, "*Komm, Herr Jesus.* Be our guest." And as I looked around the table, I saw tears, too, in the eyes of the battle-weary soldiers, boys again, some from America, some from Germany, all far from home.

Just before midnight, Mother went to the doorstep and asked us to join her to look up at the Star of Bethlehem. We all stood beside her except Harry, who was sleeping. For all of us during that moment of silence, looking at the brightest star in the heavens, the war was a distant, almost-forgotten thing.

Our private armistice continued next morning. Harry woke in the early hours, and swallowed some broth that Mother fed him. With the dawn, it was apparent that he was becoming stronger. Mother now

made him an invigorating drink from our one egg, the rest of the corporal's wine and some sugar. Everyone else had oatmeal. Afterward, two poles and Mother's best tablecloth were fashioned into a stretcher for Harry.

The corporal then advised the Americans how to find their way back to their lines. Looking over Jim's map, the corporal pointed out a stream. "Continue along this creek," he said, "and you will find the 1st Army rebuilding its forces on its upper course." The medical student relayed the information in English.

"Why don't we head for Monschau?" Jim had the student ask. "*Nein!*" the corporal exclaimed. "We've retaken Monschau."

Now Mother gave them all back their weapons. "Be careful, boys," she said. "I want you to get home someday where you belong. God bless you all!" The German and American soldiers shook hands, and we watched them disappear in opposite directions.

When I returned inside, Mother had brought out the old family Bible. I glanced over her shoulder. The book was open to the Christmas story, the Birth in the Manger and how the Wise Men came from afar bearing their gifts. Her finger was tracing the last line from Matthew 2:12: "... they departed into their own country another way."

*Happiness is a way station between too much and too little.* —Channing Pollock



# Trip plans change, but furor goes on

By Mary Belcher  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The storm of protest over President Reagan's trip to Germany next month continued to gather strength yesterday despite the announcement that Mr. Reagan would, after all, visit a concentration camp to honor the memory of those who died in the Holocaust.

Mr. Reagan reiterated his intention to lay a wreath on the graves of German soldiers at a German military cemetery at Bitburg, where several veterans of the SS, the elite Nazi military organization, are buried among the regular German soldiers.

The president said he earlier had rejected the idea of visiting the Dachau concentration camp site because he mistakenly thought such a visit was not part of the official itinerary proposed by the German government.

West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, however, "has made it plain that my invitation to visit a concentration camp was, indeed, a part of his planned itinerary," Mr. Reagan told an audience of religious leaders at the White House.

"I have now accepted that invitation, and my staff is in Germany exploring a site that will fit into our

see TRIP, page 4A

4/19/85  
Wash. Times

## TRIP

From page 1A

schedule there," Mr. Reagan said, indicating that Dachau will not necessarily be the camp he visits.

Jewish groups — as well as veterans groups — were angered by what they saw as an attempt by the White House to use a ceremony of homage to Holocaust victims to "balance" the visit to the German military cemetery.

Michael Deaver, the special assistant to the president who presided over the planning of the president's itinerary, has become the focus of the controversy. Mr. Deaver is still looking for an "appropriate" place for the president to honor Holocaust victims. "They are looking at various possibilities," Mr. Roussell said, adding that a decision had not yet been made on the matter.

In a White House briefing yesterday, presidential spokesman Larry Speakes would not answer questions

about who gave the president the information that led to the misunderstanding.

The immediate controversy erupted last week when the White House announced that Mr. Reagan would make the Bitburg visit. However, it had been simmering since the president said at a March 21 news conference that a concentration camp visit would lead to "reawakening the memories... and the passion of the time." He also asserted that Germans had a "guilt feeling that's been imposed upon them, and I think it's unnecessary."

The president made yesterday's announcement about his trip at a session of the International Conference on Religious Liberty, a two-day conference sponsored by the State Department and several major religious organizations.

The conference was sponsored by the National Association of Evangelicals, the Institute on Religion and Democracy, the American Jewish Committee, the Jacque Maritain Center of Notre Dame University and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

Kenneth Bialkin, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, said he was "gratified" by the president's decision to visit a concentration camp.

But Mr. Bialkin, who was one of

six Jewish leaders to meet with White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan yesterday, said Jewish groups still oppose the president's plan to visit Bitburg Military Cemetery for a wreath-laying ceremony May 5.

Only German soldiers — including members of the elite Nazi SS force — are buried at Bitburg, near the site of the Battle of the Bulge, where thousands of Americans were killed in 1944.

"The crimes perpetrated by the SS, said Mr. Bialkin, "cannot be expiated."

Elie Wiesel, chairman of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, said a presidential visit to a German military cemetery "remains inconceivable."

"The SS is the symbol of an international crime against Jewish people and humanity," Mr. Wiesel said, following the meeting with Mr. Regan.

"It is the SS who killed American war prisoners with their hands tied. The SS symbolizes today what we call 'Holocaust,'" he said.

Mr. Wiesel, who on Friday will accept from Mr. Reagan the Medal of Honor, said a visit to a concentration camp cannot "balance" a visit to a German military cemetery.

"There are no balances," he said. "I'm not satisfied."

Howard I. Friedman, president of the American Jewish Committee,

praised Mr. Reagan's decision, calling it "most fitting in view of his past comments about the Holocaust." However, he called for the president to reconsider his visit to Bitburg and "consider a more appropriate way to honor the fallen and to express his commitment to peace and reconciliation."

Mr. Reagan last month said he did not plan to visit a Nazi concentration camp site on his upcoming 10-day European trip because he wanted to commemorate 40 years of peace with Germany since World War II, instead of re-opening old wounds.

The president yesterday acknowledged that his decision to visit a German military cemetery while avoiding a concentration camp stop "provoked a storm of controversy."

"My purpose was, and remains, not to re-emphasize the crimes of the Third Reich in 12 years of power, but to celebrate the tremendous accomplishments of the German people in 40 years of liberty, freedom, democracy and peace," he said.

Mr. Reagan said he wants to cement ties between a free Germany and the United States and that is why he accepted Mr. Kohl's suggestion to lay a wreath at a German military cemetery.

"That's why I accepted the invitation to Bitburg, and that's why I'm going to Bitburg," he said.

PRESERVATION COPY



# Bitburg casts shadow as Reagan travels to Europe

By Jeremiah O'Leary  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Reagan leaves tomorrow for an 11-day journey to four Western European nations and an economic summit in Bonn that is being eclipsed by his visit to the German army cemetery in Bitburg.

The Reagan administration is making intensive efforts to focus world attention on important issues to be discussed at the meeting of industrial democracies in Bonn by the president and chiefs of state of Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Canada and the Federal Republic of Germany.

"If Bitburg dominates the trip, it would be a shame," said one senior administration official. "The people pointing their fingers don't know what they're talking about."

Mr. Reagan will have discussions with only two of the Allied leaders, Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone and French President Francois Mitterrand, because West

German hosts want the summit's major theme to be a commemoration of 40 years of peace since V-E Day. President Reagan has taken great care to avoid being in Germany on May 8, the anniversary of the Third Reich's surrender in 1945. On that day, the president will address the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France.

This sensitivity to German feelings on the anniversary of their defeat came to naught when a storm of outrage erupted over the May 5 visit to Bitburg cemetery where 49 members of the Waffen SS are buried amid graves of soldiers from both world wars.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl, as host, established the summit agenda and decreed that only one political statement would emerge when the seven Allied democracies meet between Thursday and Saturday. U.S. officials pointed out that the summit is primarily to discuss international economic matters, but the chiefs of state and their foreign min-

## NEWS ANALYSIS

isters may discuss whatever issues they wish. Most of this give-and-take will take place when the seven heads of state dine together.

Broad categories expected to be discussed by the Western leaders are:

- East-West relations and arms control. President Reagan will report to the leaders on nuclear arms talks in Geneva between the United States and the Soviet Union.

- There will be considerable discussion about prospects for a summit meeting between President Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail A. Gorbachev. Mr. Reagan told foreign reporters last week he would be "very willing" to meet with Mr. Gorbachev while both are attending the opening of the U.N. General Assembly in New York in September.

"I've expressed the belief that we should have a meeting and his letter

to me acknowledged that he felt the same way," the president said.

- Regional security issues including Central America, Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan and Southeast Asia.

- Better ways for the Allies to deal with international terrorism.

President Reagan's stay in West Germany is for the summit and a state visit. He also will make stops in Spain, Portugal and the one-day visit to France where Strasbourg has become the symbolic "capital" of Europe.

The May 2 meeting with Prime Minister Nakasone will be conducted because the United States has not yet achieved its goal of moving Japan to open its markets to American imports. A senior U.S. official said Japan has reached the stage where it can assume more economic leadership in the world but is

prevented by structural rigidities from opening its markets.

"Prime Minister Nakasone is committed to a belief in more open and free trade between nations," the president said in a meeting with foreign correspondents.

But he said he realizes that Mr. Nakasone has political opposition at home. Asked if he would berate Mr. Nakasone because of U.S.-Japanese trade conflicts, Mr. Reagan said great progress has been made and he believes markets will continue to open among the Allies.

The meeting with President Mitterrand will concentrate on a new round of trade negotiations supported by the French. President Reagan has said he intends to ask the Allies for a new General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) to begin early in 1986 and he does not expect the United States to be alone in that aim at the Bonn summit.

He said he is determined to defeat those who advocate protectionist policies by citing the American eco-

nomie recovery.

A senior U.S. official said the current trading system is being eroded and the old GATT system is becoming obsolete. He said a new GATT is needed on agriculture and new technologies that have developed since the last agreement.

The president will travel to Madrid on May 6 for two days of meetings with King Juan Carlos I and President Felipe Gonzalez Marquez. This state visit is intended to symbolize the end of the relative isolation of Spain from the West during the Franco years and the new participation of Spain in NATO and soon in the European Economic Community. Mr. Gonzalez, a former president of the Socialist International, is considered a pragmatist. He has strong views on Central America that do not parallel those of President Reagan.

Mr. Reagan flies to Lisbon after his May 8 Strasbourg speech. He will remain there until his return to Washington on May 10.

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OF (Organization)

PLEASE PHONE  FTS  AUTOVON

WILL CALL AGAIN  IS WAITING TO SEE YOU

RETURNED YOUR CALL  WISHES AN APPOINTMENT

MESSAGE

*Plummer & Wife (914)*  
*Fulton District*  
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*John D. Harvey*  
*2751*  
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*WELSON (914)*  
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4/12/85  
Wash Post

# Reagan to Go To German War Cemetery

By David Hoffman  
Washington Post Staff Writer

SANTA BARBARA, Calif., April 11—President Reagan, who earlier declined to visit the site of a Nazi concentration camp during his visit to Germany next month, because he said it would be "out of line," has decided to lay a wreath at a German war cemetery where many Nazi soldiers were buried after the Battle of the Bulge, the White House announced today.

Outlining the itinerary for Reagan's European trip from April 30 to May 10, the White House said the president is to visit the German Military Cemetery at Bitburg May 5 as part of an official visit to West Germany. The ceremony at the cemetery is scheduled to take place after Reagan attends the seven-nation economic summit in Bonn May 3-4. Later, Reagan is to visit Spain and Portugal and to address the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France.

White House spokesman Larry Speakes said the theme of the trip is "the American commitment to the world's most compelling human idea—individual freedom."

"The rationale is that he is there in a spirit of reconciliation, in a spirit of 40 years of peace, in a spirit of economic and military compatibility of the European community together with its specific allies," Speakes said.

Reaction from the Jewish community was tempered but angry. Nathan Perlmutter, national director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, said, "I think his visit to the cemetery of German soldiers

See TRIP, A12, Col. 1

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## Reagan Acknowledged Feeling Torn Emotions During His Wordless Visit to Bitburg Cemetery

By ROBERT W. MERRY

*Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*  
BITBURG, West Germany—It was a wordless ceremony—brief and lean. A silent walk past nearly 4,000 graves bedecked with tulips, geraniums and carnations. A roll of the drums preceded a ceremonial touch of a flowered wreath, as a bugler played "Ich hatt' einen Kameraden" (I lost a brother-in-arms).

But for all its brevity and simplicity, President Reagan's visit to the German military cemetery here yesterday was loaded with symbolism.

For many, the visit to the cemetery where 49 members of Hitler's elite SS are buried was a painful reminder of the anguish and horrors of World War II. And the powerful political feelings stirred in many Americans no doubt will linger.

But for Mr. Reagan and many others, including many Germans, the president's quiet ceremony here symbolized America's friendship with a postwar Germany of peace and freedom. President Reagan's acceptance of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's invitation to honor the war dead here was seen as a gesture of America's acceptance of the new Germany as a full partner in the Western alliance.

### 'Deep and Conflicting Emotions'

The president later acknowledged feeling "deep and conflicting emotions" upon his cemetery visit. But, he added as he spoke afterward at the Bitburg Air Force Base, "my heart was also lifted by the knowledge that from the ashes has come hope and that from the terrors of the past we have built 40 years of peace and freedom—and reconciliation among our nations."

Mr. Reagan's awareness of the negative emotions stirred by the wreath-laying wasn't far from the surface yesterday. It was reflected not only in the simplicity of the Bitburg ceremony but also in an earlier appearance at the site of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

Though that Bergen-Belsen visit was scheduled only because of intense political pressures at home, Mr. Reagan seemed genuinely moved by what he saw there—mounds of mass graves surrounded by fields of heather. During his talk at a memorial obelisk at the site, his voice wavered as he spoke of the horrible ordeals of the children incarcerated there and of the "sparkling young life" of Anne Frank, the

poetic diarist who lies buried somewhere on the grounds.

"Everywhere here are memories—pulling us, touching us, making us understand that they can never be erased," the president said in somber tones. "We are here today to confirm that the horror cannot outlast the hope—and that even from the worst of all things, the best may come forth."

### Highly Polished Performance

The day's events were carefully choreographed, and the president's performance highly polished, in what White House officials viewed as one of Mr. Reagan's greatest public-performance challenges. The aim was to satisfy what the president considered a diplomatic imperative while calming the bitter emotions that had swirled around him the past three weeks.

The political problems continued to dominate the network news back home and dampen the mood of the U.S. economic-summit delegation here in Germany.

Though past summits have been stages for displaying Ronald Reagan as world leader, this one became another vehicle for Bitburg stories. And the controversy raised questions in the minds of many about whether the White House may be losing some of its smooth efficiency in public relations.

Some White House officials seemed frustrated by the story's persistence and by their inability to change the focus to the cemetery visit's diplomatic significance. For example, an NBC News interviewer dismissed those aspects Friday by asking Secretary of State George Shultz, "Should we be reducing the horrors of the Holocaust to the moral equivalent of a White House photo opportunity?"

The strains of all this on the president's men were visible during the Bonn summit. One White House official complained of "five or six reporters who can't ask about anything but Bitburg" at news briefings. And a high-level administration official abruptly walked out of a news briefing because of reporters' jocular irreverence.

For President Reagan and many of his top aides, there was an overriding factor: The importance of West Germany to the Atlantic alliance and, within Germany, of Mr. Kohl. The unpretentious, sometimes bumbling but politically savvy chancellor has defied some powerful political forces in moving his country closer to the West.

ment official. "But it did happen, and these symbolic things have a lot of significance."

Indeed, Mr. Kohl by all accounts was extremely pleased with Mr. Reagan's action, calling it a "noble gesture" that "will last in the eyes of history." According to one aide, Mr. Kohl told the president that if Mr. Reagan were eligible, he could be elected to any office in the land.

Mr. Reagan's political capital in Germany doesn't do him much good back home, where his budget appears to be unraveling in the Senate and he continues to encounter stiff head winds in Congress on his Central American policies. And many Reagan allies think he should have cut his losses and backed out of the Bitburg visit as soon as the storm hit last month.

But some top administration aides think

"This guy had half a million in the streets demonstrating" against deploying U.S. Pershing II and cruise missiles in Germany, says a high Reagan administration official. "He stood up to it, and there aren't many leaders who would do that."

What's more, Mr. Reagan welcomes Mr. Kohl's departure from previous German leaders who sometimes fancied themselves as mediators between the Atlantic alliance and the Soviet bloc. To Mr. Kohl, Germany derives its identity from its relationship with the West.

"The Germans are a staunch ally," says the high administration official. "In time of war, they would be No. 1, even ahead of the Brits. In time of peace, they're No. 2, after the British."

### Star Wars Research

Mr. Kohl demonstrated his cooperative outlook anew during the Bonn summit by offering to help research a Strategic Defense Initiative, or so-called Star Wars anti-missile system. Even if his European neighbors hold back, Mr. Kohl suggested, Germany would participate. "They can provide technical as well as political support," says an administration official, noting the Germans' strength in the field of optics, crucial in laser-guidance systems.

Thus, Mr. Reagan has plenty of incentive to bolster Mr. Kohl's political standing at home. "If he's seen to be ineffectual, if Reagan deserts him, he'd look silly," the high official says, adding that any political slippage for Mr. Kohl would help German factions that are calling for closer relations with the East.

Of course, none of this argues for getting into such a mess in the first place, only for toughing it out. "Nobody would have done this on purpose," says a govern-

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worst is over. A recent ABC-Washing-  
Post poll had the president's approval  
rating at 55%, which is about five or six  
pts below the president's own polls,

says one official. He adds, "We think it's  
entirely possible we can put this thing, if  
not completely behind, at least lay a lot of  
it to rest."

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

May 13, 1985

DEAR Colonel Boden,

Now that we're back and have a moment to catch our breath, I wanted to <sup>MAKE SURE</sup> ~~let~~ you know how much your help meant to us. As you can see from the attached <sup>AEREX</sup> ~~AEREX~~ of a Post article, <sup>I think it's fair to say</sup> the story you tracked down for the President was a major contribution to the success of the whole Europe trip. I know the President <sup>found it very moving</sup> ~~was~~ glad to be able to use it in his remarks at Bitburg Air Base.

For <sup>my</sup> part, I am grateful not <sup>only</sup> ~~just~~ for your <sup>invaluable</sup> help in tracking down this story, but for your moral support as well. It's kind and cooperative people like you who make my job a thrill and a pleasure. Thank you.



# RELIGION

RELIGION TODAY / By William F. Willoughby



You can see why I still call him simply Dr. Z — even after all these years of knowing him. You see, the man's name is Dr. Waclaw Zajaczkowski. Linguist I am, but not a miracle man.

Dr. Z believes in miracles. He thinks there's got to be one great big miracle of God's grace between Jewish survivors of the Holocaust and the generation they since have brought into the world, and the Germans and the generation those Germans since have brought into the world.

And God knows how surely I pray for that miracle of reconciliation every time the Holocaust is used to bludgeon the conscience.

Dr. Z believes the very Christian spirit President Reagan was so severely reprimanded for when he went to the Bitburg cemetery has to be the dominating spirit instead of a mean-spirited chronic picking open of a painful wound in the human conscience — a mean spirit that in blanket form blames everyone for letting the Holocaust happen.

Or is it right-spirited to think that only World War II spawned its holocausts, or that Jews were virtually the only victims of one of the world's most devastating holocaust phenomena?

The gentleman from the St. Maximilian Kolbe Foundation here in Washington can not rightly be castigated for speaking in this way. Dr. Z and his Polish people certainly suffered more than anyone else the wholesale, triage murders carried out by the Nazis.

The Germans' purpose for marching eastward — as the Jews had left Poland and gone southward and westward into Austria and Germany earlier by the millions — was to win living room and economic viability for themselves.

And the Germans' eastward march was at the total expense of the Poles who, late in the 1800s and early this century, had in turn made it difficult for Jews to remain in their Polish homeland. The Poles, between those dates, had been ruthless against the Jews, but unlike the Nazis, they had not been so barbarous — or lethal — in their methods.

Triage in political economics is a horrible, horrible thing, whether it is British policies against the starving Irish during the Potato Famine last century or the deliberate starvation the Soviets inflicted on 17 million Ukrainians in the early part of this century.

When the Germans marched into Poland, they were under their chancellor's orders of Aug. 22, 1939, "... to kill without mercy and relieve all men, women and children of the Polish race and language. Only in his way can we conquer an area so badly needed by us."

This phase of the Holocaust was used as explicitly against the Poles as the final solution concocted in Hitler's offices was against Jews.

## Bitburg moral is forgiveness Poles, who suffered the most, learned this truth



The grave of Otto Schimek, a Wehrmacht soldier who refused to shoot Polish civilians and was executed. Today the 19-year-old martyr is revered.

*In all, the Encyclopedia Britannica says there were anywhere from 18 to 26 million people murdered during Hitler's rampage through Europe and North Africa. Had Hitler had his way, all of the Poles, as well as all the Jews he could reach, would have been exterminated.*

was, numerically, twice as heinous as the Holocaust against the Jews — 12 million Poles were murdered.

In all, the Encyclopedia Britannica says there were anywhere from 18 to 26 million people murdered during Hitler's rampage through Europe and North Africa. Had Hitler had his way, all of the Poles, as well as all the Jews he could reach, would have been exterminated.

When the Nazis were routed from Poland, they had enough poison on hand to kill 20 million more.

There was, of course, bitter enmity between the surviving Poles

For years, even the German Catholic bishops and the Polish Catholic bishops — brothers in the faith — shared in the enmity, so great was the crime against the Poles.

But Dr. Z says something very telling. The Poles, who suffered more heavily numerically than the Jews in the death camps and the mass executions, learned to forgive and to forgive generously.

The Germans, too, learned to ask for forgiveness. Many, like the despicable Mengeles and Barbies and Eichmans and thousands of others, relished what they did and, if they are still alive, should be brought to

the young among them, were victims of the Holocaust in another way.

How quick, in one singular instance, was there a willingness to forgive. To this day, Poles make pilgrimages to a simple grave of an Austrian Wehrmacht soldier — one who never had been proud of the swastika he was made to wear when he was just 17.

When he was 19, the Viennese lad was ordered to fire on Polish women and children in a mass execution at Lipiny. He refused and was shot like an animal.

The Poles exhumed Otto Schimek from his "coward's grave" and gave him a Catholic burial in nearby Machowa. Today they place on his grave letters imploring his intercession for them, revering him as a martyred saint.

It was not until 20 years after the war, during Vatican Council II, that the Catholic bishops of Poland extended a hand of reconciliation to the German bishops with these words: "We forgive and beg your forgiveness."

The forgiveness was real. There were no Polish pickets at Bitburg, though well there might have been with one-fifth of their own slaughtered in a holocaust that burned hundreds upon hundreds of their humble villages to the ground along with their inhabitants.

What Dr. Z deplors the most, he says, is "the disappearance of our Christian values from the political scene."

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive ..." has been replaced by an 'eye for an eye' ethic, as if the Nazi soldiers were not human beings, capable of repentance and reform, even if they were members of the SS," he says.

A guest from Mars, he says, "reading recent contributions to the controversy, may imagine that the Second World War was fought between some legendary 'Nazis' and the Jews," forgetting the three to four times that many who also perished — all, in the final analysis, in the name of triage.

Triage since those terrible days of World War II has killed its 3 million Cambodians, its millions more boat people, its Biafrans; earlier 1.5 million Armenians. The communists in the Soviet Union have killed their 80 million, and the communists in China have been no more humane toward their burgeoning population.

Since the Irish Potato Famine in 1846-1848 and the devastating ways of other British "land-reform" policies, we have lived in the most barbarous of times — a sick century and a half probably unparalleled in human history.

The message of Bitburg maybe is not that we should forget — we indeed need to be vigilant against madmen. But I believe President Reagan was trying to say at Bitburg something that is line with divine truth: We must never say we will

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Himmler's SS &

- SS troops -  
not policy of military to  
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Robert Donih

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Attorney - War Crimes  
Chief Trial Lawyer

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Larry Maloney  
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K.E. GRUBBS JR.

SUZANNE FIELDS

# What will we remember most about Bitburg?

## A mission that in time will become clear . . .

Last December, before Bitburg was known to the world as anything but the home of a nice pilsner, a group of four conservative American journalists traveled through West Germany. Over venison one evening in Bonn, somebody — me, I think — asked our guide if we might include Dachau on our itinerary.

Such gaiety as carried us through our dinner conversation broke instantly. Not that the temperature change was that abrupt: our guide, a bright young charmer of a generation that President Reagan wants liberated from paralyzing guilt, had well displayed that diffidence of spirit that still keeps West Germans from fully enjoying a natural affection for their nation. Have we long since reconciled, as pundits in this country keep arguing? Not quite.

Frank told us he could arrange the Dachau trip when we finally hit Munich, the anticipation of whose cultural joys he had been pumping us with. But he advised us, his sense of shame beginning to surface, of a new obscenity: Dachau was being marked up these days with graffiti. The banality of evil on a tour bus.

We polled the table. I announced, as a journalist wanting to understand this bloody century, that I wanted an impression of Dachau seared onto my consciousness. The editorial writer from St. Louis seconded the motion. The editor from an important conservative magazine based in New York thought otherwise; a sensitive soul, he picked up

K.E. Grubbs Jr. is deputy editorial pages editor of The Washington Times.

Frank's hesitation before the others did. The editorialist from Richmond professed neutrality.

None of us brought up the matter of Dachau again. Which of us was right? Was my bold declaration, I wondered, a witless expression of ugly Americanism? Was my New York colleague's solicitude for our guide — Frank had been to Dachau numerous times — a better expression of sensitivity? The nurturing of civilization, after all, demands civility, manners. Was it ill-mannered to rub Frank's nose in Dachau once more?

If you have armchair answers to these imponderables, answers clicked out of an overarching sense of righteousness, you probably are wrong. Here were four journalists who luxuriate in giving advice to, among other political leaders, the president. If we couldn't get our Dachau act together, could we expect President Reagan to?

As we interviewed West German politicians and business leaders for the next two weeks, the importance of the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II was stressed repeatedly. Six months away from the commemoration, members of the governing coalition placed great stake in the correctness of the Reagan-Kohl ceremonies. Did I hear Helmut Schmidt tell David Brinkley that the gesture of reconciliation was "artificial"? That may help explain why Herr Schmidt is the former chancellor.

As chancellor, Helmut Schmidt presided in an era, still infected by Willy Brandt's fatuous *Ostpolitik*, in which it was thought West Germany could be the special turf of arbitration between the United States and

the Soviet Union. But the hot breath of Soviet expansionism has been more palpable in the 1980s, so much so that a solid majority of West Germans has signaled its approbation to Chancellor Kohl's pro-Western commitment. (That is why it is easy to slip into a description, as I did in a previous column, of the coalition government as the majority government.)

Once again, strategic considerations and morality coincide. Surely morality would lose if the Western Alliance, of which West Germany is the first line of resistance, were to drop its guard against an evil empire more awesome than Hitler's. Helmut Kohl, for all his seeming bumptiousness, apprehends that reality more keenly than any other pretender to the chancellorship, with the possible exception of Bavaria's Franz Josef Strauss. Notwithstanding his populist strength, the Kohl coalition could collapse with the loss of a Bundestag seat here or there.

President Reagan's political instinct to help shore up the Kohl government was perfectly sound, and it rested on the historical necessity of reviving the arsenal of democracy to stop the relentless march of totalitarianism. This is the fundamental moral issue of the 20th century, and we err profoundly if we allow public relations snafus to deny that Ronald Reagan is on the right side of it.

The president wanted to fix the West's attention on the alignment of forces necessary to bring the continuing Third World War to a triumphant conclusion. Those who still want to fight the Second — not an altogether embarrassing habit — wanted to thrust the president's party into an acknowledgement of the evil of four decades ago. Hence a side trip to Dachau was proposed.

When Mr. Reagan rejected the proposal, it played in the press as a shallow disinclination to experience a downer.

Perhaps, but I wonder if the president was not more sensitive than the press corps that assaulted him. The problem with such a trip is not so much that it would be disconcerting as, well, comforting. It is comforting to know that, a generation ago, we vanquished evil. We can even devote a huge segment of our entertainment industry to the memory. Hollywood has far more Nazi uniforms in its wardrobes than tunics beribboned by the Red Army. Thanks for the memories, but let them not distract us from the present danger.

Ah, but Bitburg was refighting the Big One, was it not, and on the wrong side? To the degree necessary to show that the Allies, morally aroused, could win and live to stand over the enemies' graves in a gesture of magnanimity, it was indeed refighting the last war. World War II holds a power over us even now, and an advance man's scheduling is bound to go awry when confronted by it.

It was correct for President Reagan to turn his back on the SS graves. And it was morally correct to depict Hitler's adolescent conscripts as victims — not victims on the scale of those slaughtered in the Holocaust, but victims nonetheless. That is why it is distressing that Hyman Bookbinder, among others, continues even after the Bitburg Address to say that President Reagan "equated" their victimhood. He never did, not even in his facilely phrased apology to the press two weeks ago.

The pundits are now analyzing the Bergen-Belsen and the Bitburg orations, pawing through the paragraphs, wondering whether the "Christmas Eve" anecdote should have been placed where it was (it should have been), and so on. They are grappling with its moral complexity, writhing in its resonance.

Forty years from now, when the victims of this century's bloodthirsty politics can be tallied, its clarity will be beyond doubt.

## . . . and a compelling message

Enough is enough. President Reagan, in the opinion of many Jews — me included — erred. It was an error of judgment. We wish he had not gone to Bitburg. It was an "error," says Elie Wiesel, but not an error made with malice.

Those who wouldn't hear those moving words at Bergen-Belsen because they were too busy despising the president to listen now become the ones who are insensitive.

They don't want to pay attention to what he said because beating him over the head with accusations of shallow forgetfulness is so much more fun. They have waited a long time for an occasion like this.

The *Washington Post* speaks of the impossibility of speaking of the "raw and relevant truth concerning the systematic starving, maiming, gassing, and burning of millions upon millions of defenseless human beings at the hands of the German authorities in World War II."

But that is exactly what the president was able to do, in a way that touched us all. When he read from Anne Frank's diary, he marked her suffering, her plaintive cry for peace and tranquility, and her poignant belief that "it will all come right, that this cruelty will end," that the world would return to people of good heart.

Anne Frank's unmarked grave, like those of millions of others, speaks of what must never again happen. Anne Frank's message became Mr. Reagan's message.

Then, ill at ease and stiffly ceremonious, Mr. Reagan did what he had promised Helmut Kohl he would do. He took the trip that many of us had devoutly wished he would not take.

If it was a mistake to go there, the president, once there, did not flinch from remembering what needed to be remembered.

But the nitpickers, whose motives may be more political than moral, continue to impugn his motives for almost everything he said and did in

Germany. They even take issue with Mr. Reagan's reference to the "one man" who started it all. Is *The Post* (and Herblock) suggesting that we've been too hard on Hitler all these years?

If it is no longer fashionable to talk of collective guilt, it is acceptable to talk about "social responsibility" and forgiveness, and those values hold lessons for us all. It might help everyone who wants to focus only on Mr. Reagan's mistaken visit to Bitburg to look at the mistakes many others made toward the Jews in World War II, "errors of judgment" that cost Jews their lives. What did these errors cost those who made them?

The prime minister of Israel says the Jews can "never" forgive Mr. Reagan. If Mr. Reagan (arguably the best friend Israel has ever had in the White House) can "never" be forgiven an error of judgment in order to keep his word to a strong and committed ally, can anyone forgive Franklin D. Roosevelt (the hero of heroes to most American Jews) his "strategy" of ignoring the Jewish question?

Mr. Roosevelt held documents which verified the Nazi extermination of the Jews as early as November 1942. He merely tightened immigration for Jews and would not encourage those who wanted to mount rescue operations because he was afraid it would arouse anti-Semitism — and that might have become anti-Roosevelt sentiment. His was a tactical decision.

When the Romanian government offered to release 70,000 Jews to a refuge country chosen by the allies, Mr. Roosevelt's State Department said no.

In his book, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, David S. Wyman carefully documents the failure of the State Department, the Congress, the organs of the media, and most of the Christian churches in the country to treat the extermination of the Jews as a serious matter for the public to know about.

If Mr. Reagan can't be forgiven, how can we forgive the publishers who hid the first stories of the Jew-



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If Mr. Reagan can't be forgiven, how can we forgive the publishers who hid the first stories of the Jewish extermination in the back pages of their newspapers? The news of the first press conference documenting the extermination of 2 million Jews, verified by President Roosevelt, was tucked away on Page 20 of Mr. Sulzberger's *New York Times*, and was limited to a few paragraphs buried deep inside Mr. Meyer's *Washington Post*. (Is this why *The Post* finds it difficult to believe that Mr. Reagan can speak now of the "raw and relevant truth" about the Holocaust?)

Few Christian churches during World War II spoke of atrocities against the Jews, even when they were asked to bring them to the attention of their congregations. The Vatican and the American Catholic churches were silent.

Today we know how costly their omissions were, but we forgive. As a people, we are not grudge-holders against those who prove to be our friends.

After the war, when almost every Jewish family in the United States got word of a relative lost in a concentration camp, we vowed "never again."

"Never again" was President Reagan's message, too, delivered from the heart with forthrightness and feeling.

For *this* he can never be forgiven?

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Suzanne Fields, author of *Like Father, Like Daughter* is a columnist for *The Washington Times*.

JEWISH  
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# New York Times

—NEW YORK, MONDAY, MAY 6, 1985—

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Weather: Mixed sun and clouds today, increasing humidity; chance of showers tonight. Fair and breezy tomorrow. Temperatures: today 70-79, tonight 43-47; yesterday 57-77. Details, page C16.



The New York Times/Paul Heston

President Reagan and Chancellor Helmut Kohl at ceremony at Bitburg cemetery. Accompanying them are two former Generals, Matthew B. Ridgway, right, and Johannes Steinhoff.

## REAGAN AND KOHL VISIT BITBURG SITE AMID CONTROVERSY

### CEMETERY RITES ARE BRIEF

### Leaders Also Pay Homage to Victims of Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp

By BERNARD WEINRAUB

Special to The New York Times

BITBURG, West Germany, May 5 — President Reagan presided over a wreath-laying today at the base of a brick cemetery tower looming over the graves of nearly 2,000 German soldiers, including 49 SS troops.

Alluding to the controversy aroused by his visit to the cemetery, Mr. Rea-

Texts of speeches, pages A8 and A10.

gan voiced regret in remarks at an American air base afterward that "old wounds have been reopened."

Accompanied by Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Mr. Reagan walked slowly through the narrow, hilltop cemetery, ablaze with tulips and marigolds. Mr. Reagan did not glance at the graves during his eight-minute visit. Mr. Kohl brushed tears from his eyes. Neither made a speech at the cemetery.

Hours earlier, Mr. Reagan stood before an obelisk at the site of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where 50,000 victims of the Nazis are buried in mass graves under mounds of heather.

"Here they lie," Mr. Reagan said in a trembling voice. "Never to hope. Never to pray. Never to love. Never to heal. Never to laugh. Never to cry."

#### Merging Past and Present

Mr. Reagan's visit to Bergen-Belsen, in addition to the Bitburg cemetery, was designed to merge past and present — to pay homage to the millions of victims of Nazi Germany and to honor West Germany's emergence as a powerful democracy and ally of the United States.

"We who were enemies are now friends," Mr. Reagan told about 5,000 American military personnel, their families and local German residents at the Bitburg Air Base, less than one mile from the military cemetery.

"We who were bitter adversaries are now the strongest of allies," Mr. Reagan said. "In the place of fear we have sown trust, and out of the ruins of war has blossomed an enduring peace."

#### Protests by Jews and Others

Jewish demonstrators from the United States, France, Britain, West Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Israel and other countries protested the President's visit to Bergen-Belsen as well as the stop at Bitburg. They were joined by groups of veterans and politicians, many of them weeping.

Although Roman Catholic and Protestant clergymen took part in the ceremonies at the Bergen-Belsen site, German rabbis refused to attend because of the Bitburg visit.

#### Generals Attend Ceremony

The Israeli Ambassador to West Germany, Yitzhak Ben-Ari, came to the Bergen-Belsen ceremony — despite anguish, he said, about Mr. Reagan's visit to Bitburg. "I believe the new Germany can be trusted," he said.

White House aides have acknowledged that the Bitburg visit is probably the biggest fiasco of Mr. Reagan's Presidency. The visit, which was made at the insistence of Mr. Kohl, was overwhelmingly opposed by both houses of Congress, Jewish organizations, vet-

Continued on Page A9, Column 1





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## The Bitburg Address

President Reagan's moving oration at Bitburg was a moral triumph. As all great presidential speeches — John F. Kennedy's at the Berlin Wall, for instance, or Abraham Lincoln's at Gettysburg — it was tested beforehand by raging moral fires. His critics thought President Kennedy's appearance at the Wall would symbolize the American leader's condoning the evil system that built it. President Lincoln was besieged by pro-Union pressures for Confederate blood.

Neither Berlin nor Gettysburg were anything resembling what the critics, with that unbecoming certainty that infects the mere moralistic, anticipated. Popular moralizers, even those whose personal history confer towering authority, are often confounded by morality of a more profound order. Likewise did Ronald Reagan, at Bitburg, confound those who went into censorious fits when his plan to visit the military cemetery was announced. These people were caught in an excessive regard for symbolism, for public relations. The larger symbolism enveloping Bitburg Sunday — an eternal declaration of war against all holocausts that might be visited on this planet — escaped their dim apprehension.

To be sure, we were among those who urged the president to drop the cemetery from his itinerary. The scheduled stop itself seemed the misbegotten product of an exces-

sive regard for public relations. The hasty addition of a side trip to Bergen-Belsen, as if a death camp could be made to seem symmetrical with a Nazi burial ground, only compounded the horror of an advance man's snafu. That President Reagan resisted the quick advice of his close comrades testifies to his salutary clear-sightedness and that grace under pressure celebrated by President Kennedy.

If only the president would admit his mistake, went conventional wisdom this past fortnight, he would have demonstrated a largeness of spirit, a capacity for correction, to be praised by decent opinion everywhere. Of course, his enemies would have made certain the "insensitivity" charge stuck, as why else did he allow the controversy to swell as long as he did? Now that Ronald Reagan has spoken some of the most sensitive words from the heart of a 20th-century American president, how long will it take for his pre-Bitburg critics to show the same largeness of spirit they demanded of him?

"While much of the world still huddles in the darkness of oppression, we can see a new dawn of freedom sweeping the globe." Amen, Mr. President. And in the twilight of human history, when totalitarianism has indeed been cast into the ash bin by vigilant defenders of freedom, your Bitburg Address will resound among the most galvanizing of clarions.

Statement by Chancellor Helmut Kohl

during the Bundestag debate

on 25 April 1985

Ke  
You should  
read this  
Bill

Mr. President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Anyone who is at present confronted with Germany's recent history is well advised to approach with circumspection and a sense of concern the matters that we have to discuss in connection with the forthcoming state visit of the President of the United States of America. This is what I feel very strongly because my intention was and continues to be that of achieving on the occasion of this visit a contribution to peace and reconciliation among nations. That was also the purpose of the many talks which have been held to prepare the visit.

Early in the spring of 1984, President Mitterrand of France informed me of the plans for the celebrations marking the 40th anniversary of D-Day in Normandy. I wish to state this here because a great deal of false information has been propagated on this subject. In that conversation I immediately pointed out that as German chancellor and head of government



I was not interested in being invited to and attending... the celebrations. This met with considerable understanding. We also discussed on that occasion the possibility of documenting in a gesture of reconciliation over the graves - 40 years after D-Day, at the time 39 years after the end of World War II and about 70 years after the end of World War I - what had been possible after the war as a result of many fortunate circumstances and vigorous efforts on the part of many important democratic statesmen in France and Germany: to become allies, to bury past animosity, to bring the younger generations close together - in short, one of the greatest achievements of modern times. The suggestion was then made of doing so last autumn at Douaumont in Verdun. You all remember those scenes - 90 year old veterans of World War I, participants in World War II and several tens of thousands of German and French school children who in their youthful innocence did not realize what it all meant, namely that a seal was placed by a few people for entire nations on the fact that we have overcome our animosity and become friends and that fraternal wars in Europe have been relegated to the past.

Last November, I then discussed in detail with President Reagan that event and the talks leading up to it. I know that he is a friend of our people. I have experienced this time and again in the past few years. On the basis of the

model of Franco-German co-operation I just described, we discussed the possibility of attempting - on the occasion of his visit on the eve of the 40th anniversary of Germany's capitulation - **to achieve peace and reconciliation across the graves.** We agreed that it was desirable for the President to address young Germans 40 years later on the future, on the world of tomorrow, and to commemorate at a suitable site the victims of the national-socialist regime in view of the dreadful occurrences in Germany at that time. I proposed this from the very outset. I also suggested, if possible, to **commemorate at a military cemetery** the dead of all nations - not only the dead of World War II. Ronald Reagan immediately took up the idea of this very noble gesture and understood it to be a gesture of friendship. We started the preparations for his visit in this spirit. I find it most regrettable that this great man, who is a friend of the Germans, has encountered considerable domestic difficulties because of this envisaged noble gesture. Let me state this as a German and as the German chancellor: I am grateful to him for the attitude that he has once again demonstrated.

*humanity crushed by war*

During the detailed preparations for his visit, various sites for the gesture were then discussed in numerous talks. I suggested that he should meet with young Germans in Hambach, the site of German democracy, the site of European solidarity, the site which so strongly recalls German-American traditions



back to the 18th and 19th centuries. We also discussed at length the possibility of a meeting with young soldiers, soldiers of the US-Army and of the Bundeswehr - not for the purpose of holding large parades, but of having private conversations with soldiers insofar as the circumstances permit, with young Americans vicariously for all the hundreds of thousands of American soldiers who have constantly maintained peace and freedom for our country over the last 30 years, and with young German soldiers - 19, 20, 21 year old conscripts. In our discussion I repeatedly presented a powerful argument: that I consider it important that the President of the United States, our most important ally, should meet with young German soldiers, with the grandchildren of those who died during the war, whom we also wish to commemorate at the cemetery, with this young generation who must see the point of their service to the cause of defending freedom and peace. The idea thus arose of going to Bitburg, a little town in Germany which, more than others, lives in a symbiosis with the American garrison. Well over 100.000 US soldiers have rendered their military service there over the decades. The town and the garrison are of such a size that close ties have arisen between them. They do not speak of partnership, they experience it at first hand in their everyday lives. Well over 5.000 marriages have come about there between Germans and Americans, many thousands of children have been born of German-American marriages. If there is anywhere in Germany where one can make clear that Germans

and Americans can live together as a matter of course, then Bitburg best illustrates this. I suggested that town because I believe that it is right for tribute to be paid in a special manner - vicariously for the entire Federal Republic of Germany - to those people who are exposed to strains owing to the presence of military installations.

In view of the time available for the visit, it was only natural to consider the military cemetery on the immediate outskirts of Bitburg. It is a soldiers' cemetery set up in 1959, with the graves of over 2.000 soldiers - some of them from World War I, but the majority from World War II. They are soldiers who fell in combat during the last few days of the war and who were after 1959 transferred there from cemeteries in nearby towns and villages. Former members of the Waffen-SS were also buried at the cemetery in Bitburg, as in almost all of the cemeteries that are looked after by the Association for the Maintenance of War Graves. Anyone who discusses the subject of SS soldiers buried in military cemeteries, of SS combat troops buried there, must now, 40 years later, also live up to the obligation of adopting a differentiated approach towards historical occurrences. Many of those very young soldiers did not have any chance, like everyone at that time, to evade conscription by the Waffen-SS.



During the past few days I have asked for the names and dates inscribed on the tombstones there to be presented to me. Of the 49 SS soldiers named there, 32 were younger than 25 when they died. We are today speaking of soldiers who died at the age of 17, 18 or 19. Their short lives are much shorter than the space of time that has elapsed since their deaths. They lived but a short life in a barbaric war. Even those who lived through the war find it difficult to understand what happened, and this is even more difficult for the present generation, and it cannot be understood by those who have not lived here but have grown up on a different continent. I do not venture to judge those who experienced all the horror and barbarity of the Third Reich at Auschwitz, Treblinka and Bergen-Belsen, who are unable to forget those occurrences, what they suffered and what their next of kin suffered, and who are unable to forgive. I believe that we are not entitled to judge or condemn such an attitude. It is a magnificent achievement if someone who experienced all that - as we witnessed at Bergen-Belsen last Sunday - is able to express liberating words of forgiveness. But we have neither a moral nor a legal claim to such an attitude. In view of the undifferentiated judgments, the in some cases unacceptable collective accusations and some instances of unacceptable distortion of historical facts during the past few days, I consider it important to quote an impartial witness to those times, whose life and activities as a German patriot are beyond question in this House, namely Kurt Schumacher. In the autumn of 1951 he expressed certain

ideas which are almost of a visionary nature in view of today's debate here.

Quote:

"Over 900 000 members of the former Waffen-SS returned from World War II. This Waffen-SS is not equivalent to either the general SS or the organizations specializing in the liquidation of people; it was set up for purposes of the war. Many of the young people were undoubtedly imbued with the specifically Hitlerian ideology, but their political objectives did not include crimes as perpetrated by the twelve-year dictatorship. Hundreds of thousands were, without any effort on their part, conscripted into or transferred to the Waffen-SS as part of the Wehrmacht.

Most of those 900 000 people have become downright social outcasts. They are held jointly liable for the crimes of the Security Service (SD) and the liquidation campaigns, although, as members of the Waffen-SS, they hardly had any more to do with that than other sections of the Wehrmacht. **Every totalitarian system seeks, by creating involvement in every way possible, to generate a sense of total complicity.** In the case of the Waffen-SS, the world was successfully convinced of their total complicity. We believe it is necessary for humanitarian and civic reasons to dispel this belief and to clear the way for the vast majority of former members of the Waffen-SS so that they can live their lives as individuals and citizens."



I believe that one cannot more cogently underscore the dilemma and the duty to differentiate than Kurt Schumacher did then as a result of his own personal experience. That quotation of Schumacher was an appeal to the living, to that generation of former SS members who had survived the war. Today we are discussing on both sides of the Atlantic the fate of SS soldiers who died 40 years ago. Last Sunday I clearly stated at Bergen-Belsen that we Germans must keep alive an awareness of the full extent of the burden and responsibility imposed by history. Anyone who was unable to evade the ubiquitous violence of the national-socialist regime became involved in its injustice in one way or another as members of the Hitler Youth Organisation, as soldiers, frequently as civil-servants, and many in other fashions. Let me state this to our friends abroad and to our many young compatriots: The extent of such involvement was in many cases determined solely by one's age, by one's personal circumstances or by arbitrary decisions by the rulers.

✓ Does it truly fall to us to judge people who were involved in that injustice and lost their lives, whilst we respect the others who were perhaps no less involved but survived and have since then rightly made use of the opportunities that life has afforded them, who have served the cause of freedom and our Republic by participating in the political parties?

The idea underlying our discussions and the visit was and continues to be that President Reagan, our friend, and I will jointly commemorate the victims of the war and pay reverence to the soldiers' graves. I am grateful to the American President for this noble gesture. I am grateful that he will visit, together with me and others, Bergen-Belsen, one of the sites of Germany's shame, but I am also thankful to him for visiting the cemetery. I believe that I am expressing what millions of people feel who lost relatives during the war. If one looks around this chamber, one will discover many members on all benches who lost their fathers, brothers or - in the case of older members - even their sons and who feel that this noble gesture is directed towards them. The gesture also has another meaning: that of being a sign for young people serving in the Bundeswehr, indicating that we have learned the lesson of history.

*let us prove*

*by always remaining vigilant*

In their Pastoral Letter on the occasion of 8 May 1985, the Catholic Bishops state the following: We must pray the Lord's Prayer for and with those people against whom the German nation wronged. The link between bitter animosity and war remains a link of fate pointing towards the path of reconciliation.

At the cemetery in Bitburg we intend to commemorate those who died in the war, those who had to die in the war started by Hitler in Europe and overseas, those Germans who were forced into the war by Hitler and perished in it. Reconciliation

...



will be achieved between erstwhile adversaries if we are capable of mourning people irrespective of the nationality of those who were murdered, who fell or died. This we demonstrated at Douaumont in Verdun, and we intend to do so at Bitburg. Commemoration of the victims always keeps alive an awareness of the guilt of the perpetrators. War graves are always a reminder to those who assisted and committed the crimes of the war and the tyranny.

Werner Nachmann, chairman of the Central Jewish Council in Germany, stated at Bergen-Belsen, a place where Jews sustained untold suffering in the name of Germany, that he returned to his former home country, like many others, in order to dispel mistrust and to build bridges. He also said that most people considered his action impossible and many regarded it as inappropriate. Who, if not we Germans, appreciates the feelings of those who survived the Nazi atrocities and cannot forget or forgive. We must accept that attitude, respect it and live with it. We ask our friends, especially our American friends, to consider the reconciliation across the graves as a desire that is rooted in our hearts and minds because our meeting at the graves - those of the victims of the tyranny located in a concentration camp and those on a military cemetery - will be above all a common pledge that our nations must never again be exposed to such barbarity, that war and violence are not a means of pursuing political goals, and that we are committed to the principle that peace must emanate from German soil.



Has she changed? A dumb question which, understandably, is not answered well. Mrs. Reagan says: Not as a person. She is the same person. Has she grown? Well, yes, she says, and doesn't know how anyone could be in her position and not grow.

Moving on to the First Lady's anti-drug campaign, Ms. Stahl notes that "some critics" say that pictures of her as a warm and caring person are for "a purpose." And one of these critics who CBS believes has evidently divined this purpose is Betty Friedan, who is labeled simply "feminist." Ms. Friedan says:

"There is a feeling among women that there's maybe a conscious campaign to change her image."

Then, as the camera shows a poorly lighted, rather sinister-looking shot of Mr. and Mrs. Reagan talking in the back seat of a car, Ms. Stahl tells us: "Mrs. Reagan remains a controversial figure primarily because of the influence she seems to have over her husband. Increasingly, she's seen as a power behind the throne. Mrs. Reagan makes her views known and the president has said he listens."

**W**ow! Now, this is really a blinding revelation! To be influential is to make one controversial? Says who? Why? And Mrs. Reagan actually has the temerity to make her views known and the president listens?!

An exasperated Ms. Friedan appears again on-camera saying: "Well, all right, Nancy Reagan, if you're going to be more of a person now, then why don't you stand up a little for women's rights?"

Ms. Stahl ends her report by saying that in her second term Mrs. Reagan is more confident, more independent. And she quotes the First Lady as saying of herself that she's a late bloomer.

Now, there are several things to be said about this not too subtle hatchet-job on the First Lady. For starters, Mrs. Reagan is standing up for women's rights by speaking out against drug abuse. A large percentage of the people who abuse drugs are female. And all of the mothers of these drug-abuse victims are women.

Since 1982, in her campaign against drugs, Mrs. Reagan has traveled 60,000 miles; she has visited 44 states and 27 cities; she has spoken to audiences at 16 schools and one university; she has given 93 interviews; she has appeared on 12 TV and radio shows; and she has received 12 awards for her work.

To imply that she's doing this simply to "change her image" is a canard, a slander. In fact, in this CBS report, Ms. Stahl herself said that Mrs. Reagan has stuck with her anti-drug campaign "against the advice of her media experts, who said it was too depressing." So much for the idea that this campaign is designed to enhance her image.

**A**nd finally, to be sure, Mrs. Reagan is not standing up for women's issues, at least not as these issues are defined by feminists — and for this she deserves applause. It's true that the First Lady is not out stumping the country in defense of a woman's "right" to murder her unborn child, for example. And thank God she isn't.

But, no, Mrs. Reagan is basically the same person she has always been. She is neither "more confident" nor "more independent" and she bloomed years ago. And, as First Lady, she remains a rose among the news-media thorns who interview her, which — come to think of it — is probably what's bugging these folks.

John Lofton is a staff columnist for The Washington Times.



## Trying to explain the Bitburg visit

**W**ho says April is the cruelest month? That must be the question Kremlin leaders are asking — and for them May promises to be better still. For it is in May that the Soviets will be receiving — if all goes as President Reagan and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl say it will — a gift beyond imagining: the Bitburg trip.

Could the Soviet propagandists who have spent so many years portraying the United States as a friend of fascism have imagined in their wildest dreams that there would be granted them actual footage of a U.S. president paying homage at the graves of Hitler's soldiers?

Nor could the rest of us have imagined that we would be hearing from official Washington such explanations as have been heard.

The affair began, we are informed, because Mr. Kohl cried in Ronald Reagan's office. It continued with advance man Michael Deaver and a retinue of 20 going to Germany, where Mr. Deaver was accorded the rare honor of a meeting with the chancellor.

The gratified Mr. Deaver proceeded apace to Bitburg, where a heavy snow prevented him and his retinue from noticing SS insignia on some of the gravestones. Thus Mr. Deaver and party returned home secure in the belief that Bitburg posed no problems for a presidential visit — and under the impression that American soldiers, too, were buried there. Once the plans were announced, it was discovered, alas, that the cemetery contained members of Hitler's Waffen SS: and no American soldiers.

Thus ends the official outline of events, an outline, it seems necessary to say, that is not some product of satire but includes the exact reasons used to explain the Bitburg choice.

This alone should give us pause. Who among our officials in his right mind — and having the slightest acquaintance with history — would believe that American fighting men of World War II would lie buried in a German military cemetery?

Regarding the gravestones of the SS, the uproar obscures the truth that a presidential visit honoring Hitler's regular troops — who fought side by side with the SS — would hardly have been more acceptable.

What would have happened had the SS markings been visible at Bitburg? Mr. Deaver, we are informed, would certainly have sought another

military cemetery — one without SS graves. Only there are no military cemeteries in Germany without SS graves, as one West German has pointed out.

Not that such facts have any impact on White House spokesmen and others involved in "damage control." Take Republican Rep. Marjorie Holt of Maryland, who told a reporter, "Every place we go, we bring people to Arlington Cemetery ... I can't see any difference." Then came a sortie from Donald Regan, speaking in private with a White House visitor who was urging cancellation of Bitburg. The president's chief of staff repeatedly challenged, "Would you object if Chancellor Kohl visited Arlington?"

Here we have not just a congresswoman, but the president's own chief of staff, neither of whom sees any difference, symbolically, between the burial ground of those who died for Nazism — and Arlington.

What is wrong with these people?

**I**n letters to *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*, author William Shirer (*The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*) wrote with some emotion that, of the hundreds of German soldiers he talked to as a war correspondent in the last, as well as in the earliest, days of World War II, he found not one who "considered himself a victim of Nazism," not one of those teenagers (the kind cited in Mr. Reagan's address) who "did not express his utter loyalty to Hitler and the Third Reich," who did not "believe fanatically in Hitler's cause."

Such testimony will from the looks of things, fall on deaf ears — for a while, at any rate. So, while everyone waits for Mr. Kohl to come to his senses, or the president to his, we shall continue to hear the manderings about Arlington and Bitburg, and of the advance men's progress around Bergen-Belsen.

Even so, some good has come of the Bitburg business. The strong popular reaction against the trip proves that although our century's history and its meaning may have escaped those at the White House, it hasn't escaped most Americans.

So clear was the evidence of this memory of why the war against Hitler could not be considered a war like any other that it moved a West German official to recognize, with wonder, "How quickly history comes breaking through."

So it does. And for this convincing proof — which is a tribute to Americans — we can be grateful to the architects of Bitburg.

RUDDI  
From page 1D

his eyes, the way he said they were lying."

Knowing he couldn't, Father Varga went with the first two men took him and left him there — I shall, of course. Two men and took him to a bunker which might be called the sub-pit. They left him.

Finally, a third pair took Varga to a bunker, a besieged Hungarian had locked him in the bunker structure. Like Raoul, the humanitarian effort "disappeared."

But why? In Father other than his being leader dedicated to his democratic ideals, he had Russian eyes because war he had passed to the information on the Soviets' action of Polish officers in Forest. He had been an interloper for Poles with photos and documentary evidence of the massacre.

Interrogated relentlessly garbage-like food, and windowless, subterranean; the bunker outside Bitburg nearly two weeks. Father was moved to still another house — for his "trial."

A new interpreter assigned for the proceedings told Varga the outcome had decided. "You are condemned to death because you are a traitor," the priest's fellow inmate said. "We know that you gave direct order everybody who knows about Katyn." Still, in a secret judicial process, Father would be granted the right the interpreter also told him.

And it was as predicted, Father's interrogator of bunker presiding, the low quickly convicted Father an enemy agent, sentence death, and granted the a plea for an appeal. The appeals have followed the same, pre-course, but for the interpreter self-proclaimed atheist and mist whose early life as an illegitimate child in a small village had been embittering. Only the village had been kind to him, by the like story he soon poured Father Varga in their pretensions. And Father Varga told him of that priest, who in fact taken the child into his care raised him for four years.

At first, Father Varga did believe the story: "I thought he be an agent provocateur." He appeal proceeding, however interpreter carefully of Father Varga. "You say, 'I priest, a peasant, and I had connection with the Americans sabotage Underground,'" he

Then, during the appeal before a dignified-looking colonel, the interpreter did not always to translate Father's answers exactly as given. He didn't speak Russian himself.

Varga sensed that the interpreter was more or less "giving him a line." Then, it was over. The judge startled Father Varga: "You free, you are a friend!" interpreter, it seems, had come the appellation "judge" that Varga was not the man the Russian thought he was. A day later, after he was found out, the Hungarian translator was shot in the same suburban house.

Father Varga, though, was unlike the ill-fated Wallenberg public figure, politician; Father Varga soon was in the eye and could not so secretly be lited off by the Russians occur Hungary at war's end.

In postwar elections, which Communists at first tolerated,

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Richard Nixon:  
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## 'We will never forget' – Reagan



Photo by James Fiedler Jr./The Washington Times

Elmer Cerin places a carnation in a wreath at a memorial service at Arlington National Cemetery yesterday. The service, attended by more than 300 World War II veterans and Holocaust survivors, was organized as a more "appropriate" way to mark Europe's liberation than President Reagan's controversial visit to the Bitburg cemetery. Story on page 5B.

By Jeremiah O'Leary  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES FOREIGN SERVICE

BITBURG, West Germany — Wracked with emotion and close to tears, President Reagan yesterday mourned the 50,000 Jews who died in the Nazi concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen and the German war dead at Bitburg's cemetery as human beings who were crushed by a vicious ideology.

Speaking under a cold, gray German sky, the president delivered what may have been the two greatest speeches of his lifetime in the stark surroundings of the Nazi death camp and later at Bitburg Air Base after a 10-minute visit to the Kolmeschohe Cemetery.

The two visits, centered on the most bitter controversy of his political career, were a testament to his commitment that, after 40 years of peace, one great war will not plant the seeds of the next.

see REAGAN, page 7A

### Inside today's Times

It was the biggest political ordeal of Reagan's presidency. Page 7A.

Reagan gets world leaders behind his nuclear arms talks strategy but gets no pledge of support, for "star wars" program. Page 8A.

Text of addresses at Bitburg and Bergen Belsen. Page 8A.

The Bitburg address was a moral triumph. An editorial, page 9A.



# No smiles for president at brief visit to war cemetery

THE WASHINGTON TIMES FOREIGN SERVICE

BITBURG, West Germany — Seeing through to completion an event that had produced controversy and anguish, President Reagan yesterday compressed his stay at a cemetery for German war dead to just seven and a half minutes.

He and Chancellor Helmut Kohl just nodded to each other without shaking hands and slowly strolled around the semicircular walk beside the large stone crosses around the graves.

Every grave marker in the small Kolmeshohe burial ground was freshly decorated with flowers, those of SS men and ordinary soldiers alike. There were reports that some of the SS graves were decorated by television cameramen, presumably to enhance "visuals."

The wreath from Mr. Reagan was marked only, "From the President of the United States." A German army bugler sounded the plaintive notes of an old soldiers' dirge, "Ich Hatt Einen Kameraden" (I Had a Comrade in Arms), roughly equivalent to "Taps."

President Reagan called 90-year-

old Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway out of retirement to help him through the biggest political ordeal of his presidency. The two men laid the wreath of white lilies, yellow roses and blue irises at the slate-gray monument to the dead of World War I.

The West German chancellor was joined by Gen. Johannes Steinhoff, 71, a Luftwaffe ace with more than 300 allied planes to his credit and a badly scarred face from his war wounds.

As the president's motorcade entered the small town of Bitburg, where 12,500 Germans live alongside 12,500 American airmen, Mr. Reagan saw a sprinkling of signs and heard some chanting for and against the visit. Some Americans in civilian clothes shouted in unison, "Please don't go!" over and over.

One sign proclaimed, "Murderers - Victims? No!"

The journey from Bonn to Bergen-Belsen, then to Bitburg, was somber. The usually smiling face of Ronald Reagan was replaced with grimness, and he didn't wave happily as he is accustomed to do when boarding or alighting from aircraft.

Arriving at Bergen-Belsen, the Reagans were greeted by a handful of demonstrators who appeared to be American and who shouted, "You don't belong here! We don't want you to go in there." The Reagans went first to the document house.

Holding on to each other tightly as if for support, Mr. and Mrs. Reagan looked at all the panels and photos of stacked bodies found there when the British captured the camp on April 15, 1945.

Even his delivery of the two powerful speeches at the concentration camp and at Bitburg air base was subdued despite the powerful and moving words. The speeches were written by John Gilder and Ken Kachigan — Mr. Kachigan was called back to the White House for the duty.

At Bergen-Belsen, the visit he added after the furor arose about the honors being paid the German war dead, the president presented a wreath of green ferns at the obelisk honoring the 50,000 victims of the Nazis who died there. The floral tribute bore the legend, "The People of the United States of America."

The Bergen-Belsen ceremony, in

a field of heather broken by the mounds where thousands of Jews and other victims of the Nazis lie, was boycotted by the Central Congress of Jews in Germany. Twenty-six rabbis were invited. None came. "Members of my family died in this place," Moniek Cukier, 57, a Jewish survivor of Auschwitz who is a meatcutter at a U.S. Air Force base. "Personally I believe it is the right thing to give a sign. Bergen-Belsen is the right sign but I am not happy as a Jew. But I think the new Germany can be trusted."

Chiseled in granite in many languages are the poignant messages of the horrors that took place in the concentration-camp. One sign, in English and Hebrew, read, "Israel shall remember the 30,000 Jews exterminated in the concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen at the hands of the murderous Nazis. Earth conceal not the blood shed on thee."

When he got to the air base from which American and German airmen guard Europe against attack, Mr. Reagan was cheered loudly by 9,000 American and German spectators. Bitburg is a GI town. Many marriages between American men

and German women have had their beginning here.

German and American soldiers were drawn up in a three-cornered square in front of a hangar. The German band played "The Star Spangled Banner" and the U.S. Air Force band played Germany's anthem.

Only on the flight back did the president's mood appear to lighten. As he walked through the staff cabin, his aides gave him an enthusiastic round of applause. Reporters on the plane said his smile bordered on a beam.

Jewish leaders were deeply disturbed by his seven-minute visit to the Bitburg military cemetery.

"I never thought I would live to see this day," said Elie Wiesel, chairman of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, in an NBC television interview.

"The road from Bergen-Belsen to Bitburg is a very long one," he said. "I thought it would take centuries for humankind to cross it. And the president of the United States has just crossed it in less than one hour."

Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal agreed that Mr. Reagan's visit to

Bergen-Belsen would not "neutralize" the effects of his visit to the military cemetery at Bitburg.

Immediately after World War II, he said, "Germans condemned Hitler because he lost the war. But the young Germans of today, they condemn Hitler because he started the war."

On this summit trip, President Reagan also absolved White House Communications Director Patrick Buchanan of any impropriety concerning some notes he took several weeks ago at a meeting with Jewish leaders about the president's visit to Bitburg cemetery.

Asked if Mr. Buchanan was in hot water because of the widely circulated NBC television report about the notes he took at the meeting, the president said, "No, because the way it was portrayed to the public was completely false, and he was charged with something he hadn't done."

Mr. Buchanan reportedly scrawled the words "succumbing to the pressure of the Jews," presumably reflecting the conversations of the Jewish leaders.

## REAGAN

From page 1A

"Twenty-two years ago, President John F. Kennedy went to the Berlin Wall and proclaimed that he, too, was a Berliner," Mr. Reagan said. "Today, freedom-loving people around the world must say, I am a Berliner. I am a Jew in a world still threatened by anti-Semitism, I am an Afghan, and I am a prisoner of the Gulag, I am a refugee in a crowded boat foundering off the coast of Vietnam, I am a Laotian, a Cambodian, a Cuban, and a Miskito Indian in Nicaragua. I too am a potential victim of totalitarianism."

In the graveyard where 49 Waffen SS soldiers lie beside 2,000 ordinary German dead of both world wars, Mr. Reagan announced that his visit there had reopened some old wounds and many emotions in the American and German people.

"This I regret very much because this should be a time of healing," he declared. "Our gesture of reconciliation with the German people in no way minimizes our love and honor for those who fought and died for our country."

But his special message was to the Jewish victims and survivors of the Holocaust. He said many are wor-

ried that reconciliation means forgetting.

"I promise you, we will never forget," he said. "I have just come this morning from Bergen-Belsen where the horror of that terrible crime, the Holocaust, was forever burned in my memory. No, we will never forget, and we say with the victims of that Holocaust: 'Never again.'"

Returning to the controversy that has raged for a month, President Reagan said the crimes of the SS must rank among the most heinous in human history.

"But others buried there were simply soldiers in the German Army," the president said. "How many were fanatical followers of a dictator and willfully carried out his cruel orders? And how many were conscripts, forced into service during the death throes of the Nazi war machine? We do not know."

President Reagan said there were thousands of soldiers to whom Nazism meant no more than a brutal end to a short life and added, "We do not believe in collective guilt."

He spoke of a German soldier of 15 lying in Bitburg cemetery and said perhaps if that boy had lived he would have joined his countrymen in building the new democratic Federal Republic of Germany.

**"People were brought here for no other purpose but to suffer and die."**

But Mr. Reagan rose to dramatic heights earlier at Bergen-Belsen where he said, "Above all, we are struck by the horror of it all — the monstrous, incomprehensible horror. We can never understand as the victims did. Nor with all our compassion, can we feel what the survivors feel to this day and will feel as long as they live."

Mr. Reagan did not mention any Nazi by name, not even Adolf Hitler or Josef Kramer, the Bergen-Belsen camp commandant. But he used almost apocalyptic language about the German Fuehrer who caused the deaths of millions in his Third Reich.

"The awful evil started by one man was uniquely destructive to the millions forced into the grim abyss of these camps," he said, his face wreathed in pain. "Here lie people, Jews, whose death was inflicted for no reason other than their very existence. Their pain was borne only because of who they were and because of the God in their prayers. Alongside them lie many Christians,

Catholics and Protestants.

"For year after year, until that man and his evil were destroyed, hell yawned forth its awful contents. People were brought here for no other purpose but to suffer and die. To go unfed when hungry, uncared for when sick, tortured when the whim struck, and left to have misery consume them when all there was around them was misery. Here death ruled."

He said he had come to the camp to confirm that the horror cannot outlast the hope. The president spoke of the free Germany represented by Chancellor Helmut Kohl and how far it has come from the time when the victims wondered if anything could survive.

"Surely we can understand that, when we see what is around us," President Reagan said. "All these children of God, under bleak and lifeless mounds, the plainness of which does not even hint at the unspeakable acts that created them. Here they lie. Never to hope. Never to pray. Never to love. Never to heal. Never to laugh. Never to cry."

And he spoke of 15-year-old Anne Frank who died at Bergen-Belsen and is buried somewhere among the mass graves after hiding for two years keeping her diary in an Amsterdam attic.



President Reagan and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl are flanked by Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway and Johannes Steinhoff at Bitburg yesterday.



## LEISURE &amp; ARTS

## A Bitburger Baedeker: The Trip That Might Have Been

By ROGER THURLOW

*Bitburg, West Germany*

Mention the name of this town in most any German bar, and someone will put a beer in front of you. A Bitburger Pils. A Bit.

The slogan "Bitte ein Bit" is as famous here as "Coke Is It" in America. Say those magic words and you'll get a thin glass of golden-brown beer topped off with a thick, white foam. A bit bitter, perhaps, but overall a most marvelous taste.

Those who swear by Bitburger Pils, and there are many, claim it has medicinal properties. "Nights Bit, mornings fit" is a common prescription here.

Thus, it is perplexing to locals how Ronald Reagan awoke with such a hangover—which is what the persistent din over the

## The Mobile Guide

president's coming visit to a German graveyard that includes the bodies of Waffen SS soldiers must feel like. Obviously, something was lost in the transatlantic translation, for when Mr. Reagan said "Bitte ein Bit" he didn't get a beer, he got a cemetery and a storm of outrage from the world's Jewish community, the U.S. Congress and the American Legion.

The mess Mr. Reagan has made of his German travels—he'll be heading to Bitburg on Sunday after four days in Bonn—is beyond the realm of even the ugliest American tourist. Any other time, Mr. Reagan would have been warmly welcomed here. A stroll through the pedestrian shopping mall could have included a stop at one of the many bars where the Bitburger Pils mascot—a jolly man in a green cap and

white bow tie holding a beer aloft—gives the OK sign with his thumb and forefinger. The president could have sidled up to the bar, slammed his fist on the counter and said "Bitte ein Bit."

They would have loved him.

President Kennedy forever endeared himself to the Germans (hands down, he's the favorite president here) when he said "Ich bin ein Berliner." Language purists, and there are many of those here, too, will tell you that Mr. Kennedy's famous words also mean "I am a doughnut," pointing out that "Berliner" is the name of a favorite pastry. But he was speaking their language, both literally and figuratively. In matters like these, the Germans are a forgiving lot.

But not in matters like the one that has developed over Mr. Reagan's Bitburg visit. The 12,000 residents of the brewery town are hopping mad. They fear that the town, known for its beer since 1817, when the Th. Simon brewery opened, now will be known only for its cemetery and the SS soldiers buried there. The president has already overstayed his welcome, and he hasn't even been here yet.

And it's a shame, for Bitburg is really a very nice place. Mr. Reagan would like it here. Bitburg is a bit like small-town Middle America. Instead of a big grain elevator towering over the town, the big brewery looms over the landscape. Strangers would wave at Mr. Reagan, like they do at anyone else with a smile. Store managers would point the way to a competitor's shop if they didn't have what the president was looking for. He would find a lot of American names written on mall boxes, seeing as how many of the local frauleins take to marrying boys from the neighboring U.S. Air Force base. The number of German residents is matched by about 12,000 U.S. servicemen.

Bitburg is snuggled deep in the Eifel region of West Germany, a pretty presidential vacation spot of hills and forests abutting Luxembourg and Belgium. The town is located about 84 miles south of Cologne,

71 miles west of Koblenz and only 18 miles north of Trier, a picturesque town of Roman ruins that last year celebrated its 2,000th birthday. To the south lie the vineyards of the Mosel River Valley.

The best way to approach Bitburg is not aboard Air Force One, but in a car winding along the small Eifel roads. Watch out for the Bitburger Pils transport trucks that seem to be everywhere. You can't miss them unless you're colorblind: Nearly all of them are green with yellow front grills

Bitte ein Bit!

year-old girl, Helene Nosbuesch, lies nearby.

It has been reported that Mr. Reagan will stay as far away from the SS graves as possible. That means he'll end up way over on the right side, by the toilets, because the SS graves are scattered all over. It would make best sense for the president to spend a moment at the front of the cemetery inside the towerlike memorial—a plaque reads, "Greater love has no man than he who lays down his life for his

friends"—but the problem is that several SS soldiers are buried front and center in row one.

Earlier on Sunday, Mr. Reagan will see the mass



and red hubcaps. And forget about listening to the radio, as low-flying Air Force jets produce one sonic boom after another.

In Bitburg itself, any presidential itinerary worth its salt would include a tour of the brewery. It's free, and at the end you get to sample the beer. But reservations for the tour must be made in advance, and based on the muddled planning of his trip, the president probably would have been left standing outside.

Besides, the tour lasts about two hours, and as one presidential adviser has said, the controversial trip to Bitburg will probably be shortened to about 18 seconds. Which leaves just enough time to get out of the limousine at the cemetery, lay a wreath and speed off.

The military cemetery is a quaint little plot containing about 2,000 graves marked by flat stones imbedded in the ground. It is at the end of a road that runs through a residential neighborhood. In addition to the German soldiers, grave markers show that the family Schneider, including father, mother and four daughters, is buried here, all having died on Jan. 2, 1945. An 11-

burial mounds of concentration-camp victims at Bergen-Belsen. In contrast to a camp like Dachau, where some of the former buildings remain, Bergen-Belsen is a nicely manicured park devoid of the old barracks. It is located between the two small towns of Bergen and Belsen, and appears all of a sudden in the rolling countryside. Located about 40 miles north of Hanover, Bergen-Belsen is in farming country. The people there speak textbook German and live in cozy villages.

The camp is open to the public, and one could spend several hours there, including a visit to the documentation center. But Mr. Reagan will leave after about an hour. He'll then fly to Bitburg for his "18 second" cemetery visit, and then head off to inspect U.S. troops. He'll end the day with a state dinner in a castle between Cologne and Bonn.

It's a tight schedule that apparently doesn't leave much time for lunch. Were he to stay in town longer, Mr. Reagan would be well-advised to taste the local Bitburg cuisine. He could go to Chez Claude, a French restaurant, or to Da Luigi, a pizza joint. But since this is a state visit to Germany, how about some German specialties?

The big thing this time of year is fresh asparagus spears, covered with either melted butter or hollandaise sauce, and served with cold ham or a schnitzel. It's particularly good at the Hotel Restaurant zum Simonbrau, which is connected to the brewery.

Or he could try an Eintopf, a meat and vegetable stew. But be forewarned: Hitler had prescribed that everyone should eat Eintopf, rather than a fancy roast, one Sunday a month and send the money saved to the poor.

Come to think of it, the president had better stick to the asparagus.

Mr. Thurlow is the Journal's Bonn correspondent.

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# Reagan Speaks to Allay Uproar

## Controversy Over Bitburg Called for 2 Speeches Instead of 1

By Lou Cannon  
Washington Post Staff Writer

**BITBURG, West Germany, May 5**—Whenever President Reagan finds himself in political difficulty, his instinctive and time-honored remedy has been to solve his problem with a speech.

Today, trying to dampen one of the most troubling controversies of his presidency, Reagan gave two speeches. While neither measured up to the extravagant advance billing of White House advisers, the president's performance served his purposes of demonstrating that he understood both the "uniquely destructive" nature of the Holocaust and the critical importance of postwar reconciliation.

At Bergen-Belsen, where his voice was muted and sometimes strained, Reagan talked of the killing of children and the murder of Jews, "whose death was inflicted for no reason other than their very existence."

At Bitburg Air Base, where Reagan's spirits rose in the presence of bands and approving U.S. military families, he came as close as he ever has in a major speech to admitting that he might have made a mistake.

The president acknowledged that his decision to lay a wreath at a German military cemetery had "opened old wounds" during a visit that was supposed to be "a time of healing." He assured Jews that reconciliation did not mean forgetting Nazi crimes. Earlier in the week Reagan had confided to an intimate that he was frustrated and angry over being depicted as insensitive to the Holocaust after 40 years of speaking up about "Nazi crimes" against the Jews.

Afterward, Reagan called the day one of "hope and remembrance," but his uncharacteristically sober mien seemed to say that it was also a difficult ordeal. The words of Reagan's speech at Bergen-Belsen proclaimed that "horror cannot outlast hope," but Reagan appeared somber rather than hopeful much of the day.

Before he spoke he had walked through the camp's Document House and viewed the photographs of stacks of corpses, then strolled through a series of memorials above mass graves.

Reagan always has been sensitive to the notion that he is a former actor who can weep on cue. At Bergen-Belsen he appeared to be trying not to cry, almost trying not to act, as he gave a speech recalling "the monstrous, incomparable horror" of the camp.

But his voice broke nonetheless as he read from a famous passage in the diary of Anne Frank, a 15-year-old Dutch Jew who died at the camp, which said, "I still believe that people are good at heart."

Reagan prefers to speak from notes or a teleprompter. Today, he appeared hampered in his delivery, particularly at the ex-concentration camp site, by having to read from a prepared text.

He had one minor slip, referring to the camp as "Berger-Belsen" and added one brief passage in which he said he had reflected, as he flew in from Hanover over the green countryside, that "there must have been a time when the prisoners at Bergen-Belsen, and those at every other camp, must have felt the springtime was gone forever from their lives."

In his subsequent Bitburg speech, written a week ago, Reagan read from another text describing his visit to Bergen-Belsen and saying he had felt "great sadness" there.

Reagan's speeches, largely crafted by his premier political speech writer Kenneth Khachigian, were notable for what they omitted as well as what they said.

At Bergen-Belsen, where more than 60,000 civilians, including 30,000 Jews, perished, Reagan made no mention of the 50,000 Russian prisoners of war who died there earlier in the war.

And at Bitburg, Reagan converted his call for reconciliation into a familiar attack on communism when he recalled president John F. Kennedy's declaration that he was a

Berliner and went on to compare himself to a Jew, an Afghan, "a prisoner of the Gulag," a Vietnamese refugee, a Laotian, a Cambodian, a Cuban and a Miskito Indian in Nicaragua.

Reagan did not mention the Soviets by name. He also did not mention Adolf Hitler, although he portrayed the crimes of Nazism as the evil work of "one man," an act of deference to his German hosts.

While some of the president's aides publicly and effusively praised the speeches—Assistant Secretary of State Richard R. Burt called them "a brilliant performance"—the private expectations of the president's advisers were more subdued.

When the White House launched its damage-control campaign last week to extricate Reagan from the Bitburg controversy, a senior official said, "We can't make a plus of it, but we can ameliorate the damage."

The expectation of Reagan's strategists was that a satisfactory performance by the president in his two speeches and a quick cemetery ceremony would subdue the controversy and allow Reagan to proceed to other things.

The White House has been buoyed by surveys taken by veteran Reagan pollster Richard Wirthlin said to show the president's popularity holding firm in the face of Bitburg. Some other surveys, however, give conflicting results.

While it probably will be days or weeks before it becomes clear whether Reagan has succeeded in putting Bitburg behind him, the controversy has left two legacies.

One is a conspicuous deterioration of relations between the president and the press, whom Reagan and his chief aides blame for blowing the incident out of proportion.

The other is an unaccustomed defensiveness in the Reagan White House, which has suffered a string of defeats on budget matters and foreign policy. Reagan's more sensitive strategists recognize that Bitburg could become the symbol of a declining presidency if Reagan cannot reverse his fortunes.