



Eugene's Story, Chapter 5

I didn't stay long in Buchenwald. [A few days, 3 or 4 days later, we were selected again and this time we were put on German army lorries. We travelled 4 or 5 hours if my memory is correct and we arrived in a place called Dora Mittelbau. Now Dora Mittelbau is in the middle of the Harz mountains. Dora had one of the largest tunnels in Germany where they manufactured the V1 and V2 rockets. We were ordered into a block at 5 in the morning, we were woken up, lined up outside, counted, given our cup of ersatz café, if you were in the front it was a little bit warm, if you were in the back well naturally it was cold. We were set off. We approached a massive complex of tunnels, now I never been into a tunnel in my life and as we went through the place was blazing, lit up with fluorescent lighting, massive complex. And we must have marched a good kilometre or more and then we were ordered to turn right and we turned right and when we went in it looked like a barrack room. There were bunk beds there and we got worried, I got frightened that this is where we gonna be because daylight disappeared completely.

And we stayed there for about an hour or so then we were ordered out and we were broken up in different commandos. We were selected to go closer to the other part of the tunnel where there were prisoners still drilling, making it larger, and our task was four of us to a little truck what they use, used to use in the coal mines with each side opening and we had to lift the rock up, put it on, load it, then two on the front two on the back we had to run with it on like a railway line a good distance. We had to empty it then there were other prisoners who moved it. And that's what we did for 12 – 14 hour shifts daily. I always thought after liberation that I spent 3 months in Dora but later on I got to tell you what we discovered not so long ago, only last year, that I actually spent 5 months there. Now life was terrible there. After you done a day's work you had to be lined up in Appel and Dora had about 30,000 prisoners. Dora is well documented being the worst slave camp in Germany. Our routine was after work to be lined up again on Appel and to be counted. It didn't matter whether it rained, sunshine or snow we had to stand there till the SS confirmed that the figure tallied. If it didn't then I'm afraid you might be standing out there 2 or 3 hours. And if you collapsed, fainted, you were taken away and you never been seen again. And that's the life what it was, what life was in Dora.

When we finish on Appel we had to queue up to go into a block for our food. This thing went on, by that time that loaf became to 5. The soup became a lot weaker. We used to get every evening we got bread, maybe a little piece of margarine, maybe half an ounce, half a sausage or maybe a bit of rotten cheese, it smelt terrible and tasted horrible. When I first got to Dora, first of all in Auschwitz for the first two weeks I couldn't eat anything. I just couldn't taste it, it was horrible. But as time went on that question never entered my mind. I just ate it as quickly as I got it. But in Dora at that time, when I got to Dora, about a couple of months later, I was about 11, 11 ½ stone when I was there, big fat boy. I lost about two or three stone by then. Because that soon became 5 to a loaf. And the potato became smaller and rotten, and when you got the food you just ate it as quickly as you could get it. Sanitation didn't existed. Of course by that time we became very very lousy. We had lice crawling all over us. You could put your hand under your armpit and you gonna have a handful of lice. And it doesn't matter where you put your hand, there they were. But every 3, 2 or 3 weeks we got disinfected. So they disappear but within hours they came back.