A photo of Gerda’s father, Julius Weissman, which Gerda kept in her ski boot during her years in Nazi slave-labor camps. Julius Weissmann helped save Gerda’s life by insisting that she wear ski boots when the Nazis took her away; she wore the ski boots during a forced death march in which other young women were barefoot or wearing only sandals in the snow.

PHOTO TAKEN CIRCA 1937

A photo of Gerda’s mother, Helene Weissmann, which Gerda kept in her ski boot during her years in Nazi slave-labor camps.

PHOTO TAKEN CIRCA 1939

A photo of Gerda’s brother, Artur Weissman, which Gerda kept in her ski boot during her years in Nazi slave-labor camps. Artur was the first in Gerda’s immediate family to be taken away by the Nazis.

PHOTO TAKEN CIRCA 1937
A photo of Gerda’s Uncle Leo, taken shortly before he moved to Turkey. Sixty-seven of Gerda’s relatives, including all of her immediate family, died in the Holocaust. Only Gerda and Uncle Leo survived.

PHOTO TAKEN 1924-1925
A Nazi identification photograph of Gerda Weissman, age 16. Gerda's mother had sewn this dress from a green blanket, adding a collar from one of her own dresses.

PHOTO TAKEN CIRCA 1940
A photo of Gerda and her brother, Artur Weissmann.

PHOTO TAKEN CIRCA 1936
A school photo of Gerda, whose face is circled, second row, fifth from left.

Photo taken circa 1932
Gerda was held in several slave-labor camps, including this one, where she worked the looms in a factory setting. She and others lived in the building on the left; newly arriving prisoners were housed in the building on the right.
The Weissmann family home in Bielsko, Poland. When the German army invaded Poland, the Weissmanns were forced to live in their own basement.

PHOTO TAKEN CIRCA 1990
A photo of Gerda’s childhood friend, Isle Kleinzahler, holding her father’s hand on a street in Bielsko, Poland. Isle and Gerda spent years together in Nazi slave-labor camps.

PHOTO TAKEN CIRCA 1929
During the Holocaust, Jews and others lost all possessions, including birth certificates and other vital documents. Following the war, survivors were issued Temporary Registration documents to begin re-establishing their identities.

DATED SEPT. 23, 1945
Lt. Kurt Klein, an intelligence officer, had access to “secret” documents such as this, written at the end of World War II, at the same time Klein and others arrived to liberate Gerda and other survivors of the death march.

Dated May 7, 1945, the same day Kurt and Gerda first met.
Lt. Kurt Klein, an intelligence officer, had access to “secret” documents such as this, written at the end of World War II, at the same time Klein and others arrived to liberate Gerda and other survivors of the death march.

**SECRET**

situation becoming daily increasingly untenable for the estimated 140,000 enemy troops in the pocket, it would appear logical that they too would shortly follow the example of all Fz. Div and their follow in Northern GERMANY. However, there is no assurance of this and until they have capitulated, advancing units must be constantly on guard against local surprise and offensive action. Until the enemy has given in his arms, our troops cannot afford to take any chances at any time. The enemy lacks the capability for large-scale offensive action; all he is capable of is to defer and delay. But, locally, he definitely possesses the capability of inflicting losses and this must be constantly kept in mind by all front line units.

On the basis of identifications in contact, all but a small portion of the estimated 140,000 enemy troops in the CZECHOSLOWAKIAN Pocket are committed against the Russians in the Eastern portion of the pocket. However, with short interior lines of communication and favorable terrain, the enemy has the capability of shifting part of his armor to our immediate side of advance. There are indications that this has been done to some extent, and if the enemy proposes to fight to the last in the pocket it can be expected that he will build up against us in the next several days.

The enemy overall situation in the pocket is obscure. There is no definite information as to just what is in control. A large portion of the mobile troops in the pocket are P2, a factor that may make considerable difference on the question of capitulation. According to the statement of an officer Fz. 4 Army Field Marshal SCHEREPEN, that identified as G2 of Army Group Fz., had declared (for the record at least) that he proposed to fight to the end in the CZECHOSLOWAKIAN Pocket. This information is unconfirmed from any other source. However, SCHEREPEN has a militant Nazi background and it is possible that he may attempt to stage a Hungarian finale.

The import of all this is that the war is still continuing very actively in the CZECHOSLOWAKIAN Pocket and all 3rd US Army units must keep this fact constantly uppermost in mind. The enemy is corned and at bay, but he still has runs and ammunition and he still can kill and destroy. A Nazi is just as dangerous a beast when cornered as when on the offensive. It must always be remembered that there is only one kind of a good Nazi—dead one, or disarmed and securely locked up.

a. A captured Oberlandrat of the Iglau Protectorate stated high German officials in FRAGS believed that the Yalta Conference decided Allied forces will occupy the Jewrines as each Allied army conquered. Hence, the reason why the Germans have resisted the Russian advances so stubbornly. This coincides with Admiral Doenitz's statement of resisting the Russian's advance until the very end.

b. FRG. FREYUNG, Q2639.

c. Mission to 5th Ren Tr. No change.

d. Weather. Generally scattered to broken clouds occasionally becoming overcast with widely scattered showers.

Visibility. 4-6 miles becoming 2-3 miles during early morning haze and fog.

Winds. Westernly light becoming moderate in afternoon.


4. ENEMY CAPABILITIES. None.

D. W. Hackett
D. W. THACKERAY
Lt Col., GSC
AC of 8, G-2

DISTRIBUTION: Special.

**SECRET**

DATED MAY 7, 1945, THE SAME DAY KURT AND GERDA FIRST MET
Deutsche Wollenwaren Manufaktur
Aktiengesellschaft
Grünberg (Schles.)

An den
Herrn Bürgermeister
als Ortspolizeibehörde
(Abt. Baupolizei)

hier

direkt danach

Ihr Zeichen Ihre Nachricht vom Unsere Nachricht vom Unser Zeichen Tag
66 Rae. 4. 5. 42 Gl/He 29. 5. 42

Judenbaracke


Anbei senden wir Ihnen wunschgemäß Zeichnungen, Lageplan und Beschreibung in je zweifacher Ausfertigung zur gefl. Benutzung und bitten nachträglich um eine entsprechende Baugenehmigung.

Heil Hitler!

Deutsche Wollenwaren Manufaktur
Aktiengesellschaft

Anlagen!
Gerda dearest,

The day which dawned so gray for us is now nearly over and I am sitting in the waiting room of the Munich railroad station, meeting your thoughts halfway, while unseen hands are busy setting the wheels in motion that will carry me away from you! What happens after that is not clear.

This is the second time I am leaving Germany, having to leave behind that which is most precious to me. The first time, I did not fully perceive the gathering storm. Meanwhile the terrifying drama has taken its inexorable course. The curtain has come down, but you still remain where the tragedy was played out.

I cannot find any peace until you, too, have become a mere spectator of those events and at least a small part of the compensation that should be yours will have eased the pain. Just know that the nightmare is over and the future lies before us in brighter colors! With that in mind, Gerda: Be of good courage — I have full confidence that both of us will soon be very, very happy.

In high spirits I embrace you and kiss you,

Your Kurt
My most precious Kurt,

Another day has passed. Now, first and foremost, I must thank you for your letter, which came so unexpectedly and brought me so much joy. Your photo stands in front of me — your flowers are still fragrant. The quiet, measured ticking of the little clock reminds me that each and every minute moves you farther and farther away from me.

For the third time in my life I am experiencing the excruciating pain that all that is dearest to me and to which I clung the most has been taken from me. Forgive me for not being as brave as I should have been when I said good-bye to you. But I promise, I shall be from now on.

My thoughts of you are the core of my existence. They can conquer all obstacles.

I embrace you with many kisses,

Gerda
Many minorities — Jews, Roma (Gypsies), homosexuals, political and religious prisoners, and the mentally ill — were "marked" for annihilation by the Nazis. The felt "Jude" star included in this kit is another such symbol.
Many minorities — Jews, Roma (Gypsies), homosexuals, political and religious prisoners, and the mentally ill — were "marked" for annihilation by the Nazis. The felt "Jude" star included in this kit is another such symbol.
As allied forces encircled Germany in the fall of 1944, the Nazis tried to hide their crimes, dismantling camps and evacuating prisoners on what came to be known as death marches. Gerda’s march, in the bitter winter of 1945, lasted for 350 miles until she was liberated in Volary.
Hundreds of Nazi camps — death camps and slave-labor camps — covered the landscape of German-occupied Europe.
A postcard of the Weissmann family’s hometown, present-day Bielsko, Poland. The building on the left is where Gerda attended school as a child.

DATE UNKNOWN
Dein lieber Onkel Leo!

Die letzten Briefe von Ihnen haben erhalten und habe mir uns sehr gefreut über Euren Wohlbefinden. Im Verhältnis der Eltern scheint es mir, dass Ihre Tante ....... und die Familie meinen Besuch gerne haben könnten. Ich hätte Sie dieses nicht geschrieben, aber Sie würden sich wundern, dass die Mama nicht schreibt, ob sie beim besten Willen die Geduld nicht aufgeben kann. Was machen Sie mit meiner liebe Tante Edith und Ihrer Tante Jumminna?

Verbleibt mir alle unendliche Liebe, geheilt von Ihnen.

Dated May 27, 1940
Nazi propaganda postcard, addressed to Kurt Klein’s aunt in Buffalo, N.Y. DATED 1936
Gerda’s “Letter to Americans” was published in a military newspaper shortly after the war had ended. Gerda wrote this just two days after being liberated.

**5th Infantry Division Gets Third Quota for 85-pointers to U.S.**

A third quota of 5th Division personnel to go back to those United States under the point-and-permissible discharge system has just been announced. The new quota is the largest yet, comprising 653 enlisted men and 5 officers, who are scheduled to leave the division on June 2.

The plan thus appears to be working as promised and far better than most Red Diamond veterans expected. Ww points were frozen in the division were 414 officers and 127 enlisted men in the 4th with 216 in the 4th with 316.
Jews were forced to wear yellow “Jude” stars — German for “Jew” — marking and dehumanizing them. In the Netherlands and France, these stars were labeled “Jood” and “Juif.”