

First of three man patrol in liberation Günskirchen.

Norris Biron was just a teenager when he was drafted into the United States Army during the final years of World War II. Little did Norris know when he was in basic training in Georgia that the drive to liberate Europe would take him to a concentration camp in Austria.

In July of 1944, after Norris completed Army basic training, he sailed for Europe with the US 71st Battalion. Norris and the 71st were part of the push through France into Germany with Patton's Third Army. By April 1945, the Third Army had reached Austria where one day when Norris and two other soldiers were reconnoitering the area, they came upon the Günskirchen Concentration Camp, part of the Mauthausen-Gusen Concentration Camps Complex in Austria, which included 54 sub-camps that used slave labor.

Norris was shocked and surprised to see this camp and the conditions in the camp. Bodies were all over the ground. Emaciated men fled through the gates. Others, unable to walk, were carried by Norris and his compatriots. They fed their D-Rations to the starving and malnourished inmates. Norris says he will never forget the horrible smell of the camp—the smell of unwashed bodies, the smell of burning bodies, the smell of fear! After World War II ended on May 8, 1945, Norris was assigned to interrogate German prisoners suspected of having committed war crimes. During this time, he was asked to take prisoners to the trials in Nuremberg. Norris remembers listening to some of these trials. Norris still has nightmares of Günskirchen concentration Camps.