



**Suffolk Center on the
Holocaust, Diversity and
Human Understanding, Inc.**

Media Release

**For Immediate Release
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THE LIBERATORS: SOLDIERS AT WORK

IN RECOGNITION OF VETERANS DAY

Allied forces victoriously moving through Europe in April 1945 were unprepared for what they were to encounter when liberating concentration and death camps. Not only did they have to defeat the enemy, they also had to tend to the dead and dying under circumstances far worse than anyone could have imagined. Major Cameron Coffman of the 71st Infantry Division was quoted as saying, "As we entered the first building the sight that met our startled gaze was enough to bring forth a censorable exclamation from a sergeant who had seen the bloodiest fighting this war offered. Row upon row of living skeletons, jammed so closely together that it was impossible for some to turn over, even if they could have generated enough strength to do so, met our eyes."

For the month of November, the Suffolk Center on the Holocaust, Diversity & Human Understanding (CHDHU) has created an exhibit to chronicle the liberation of the survivors of the German concentration camps at the close of WWII. The exhibit includes artifacts of the German surrender, concentration camp uniforms, video and sound of the time of liberation, and photographs depicting the scenes experienced by the liberating army upon arriving at the camps. The exhibit will take place at the Suffolk County Community College Sayville Downtown Center, at 30 Greene Ave., and will be open daily, Monday to Friday, 8 am through 9 pm.

A **Veterans Day program** will be held at the same location from 7 pm to 8 pm on **November 9**. The program will feature **John D'Aquila** and **Werner Reich**. Mr. D'Aquila, of Port Jefferson, was a member of General Patton's 3rd Army, 11th Division that was the first to arrive to liberate the Mauthausen Concentration Camp. Mr. Reich, of Smithtown, is a survivor of the Holocaust, having been at several camps, including Auschwitz, and he was liberated from Mauthausen.

Steven Schrier, Executive Director of CHDHU, sees Veterans Day as an opportunity to remind the public of the importance of seeking peaceful solutions, yet the need at times to fight for freedom from oppression.