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## COURT OF APPEALS AFFIRMS DENATURALIZATION OF FORMER NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMP

### GUARD

WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit has unanimously affirmed a 1999 U.S. District Court decision stripping Michael Negele of St. Peters, Missouri, of his U.S. citizenship because of his admitted World War II service as an SS guard at the infamous Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp in Germany and at the Theresienstadt Jewish Ghetto in Czechoslovakia.

"This decision is a powerful affirmation that, despite the passage of many years, it is still possible to obtain a measure of justice on behalf of the victims of Nazi inhumanity," said Eli M. Rosenbaum, Director of the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations (OSI), which prosecuted the case. "Men like Negele helped ensure that those whom the Nazi regime targeted for barbaric treatment met the horrible fate that was intended for them."

Negele, 80, a retired aircraft worker, was born in Romania and served in the Romanian Army from 1942 to 1943 when Romania was an ally of Nazi Germany. He joined the Nazi *Waffen SS* in 1943 and began service as a trained guard dog handler while serving in the *Totenkopf* (Death's Head) guard unit at Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp near Berlin.

Prisoners in Sachsenhausen were confined under inhumane conditions, and thousands died there as a result of starvation, disease, hanging, gassing, medical experimentation, beatings and shootings. The Court found that Death's Head guards, such as Negele, kept track of prisoners, guarded them during slave labor work details outside of the camp, and brought them back to camp at night. All guards carried firearms and were under standing orders to shoot prisoners who attempted to escape.

At Sachsenhausen, Negele was selected for special training in the use of a guard dog. Guards with guard dogs were used to patrol the camp, to guard prisoners on work details outside of the camp, and to pursue escaping prisoners. The SS regulations stated that dogs were trained to attack prisoners and, if necessary, to "bite without mercy."

After serving at Sachsenhausen, Negele and his guard dog were transferred to the Theresienstadt Jewish Ghetto in what is now the Czech Republic.

Negele admitted during his April 1999 trial that he had performed guard duty with a trained guard dog at both Sachsenhausen and Theresienstadt. He also admitted that his assignment was to prevent prisoners from escaping and to use his dog to pursue and catch prisoners who tried to escape.

The court found that Negele entered the United States in 1950, using a visa he had obtained in Germany by concealing his SS service. Under U.S. immigration law, Negele would not have been eligible had he disclosed that he had served in the *Waffen SS* and been a guard at a Nazi-operated concentration camp and ghetto.

This was the third court decision his office had obtained in less than a month finding that Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp guards had illegally entered the United States. In July, a Federal judge in Philadelphia stripped Theodor Szebinskyj of Drexel Hill, Pa., of his citizenship after finding that he had assisted in the persecution of prisoners at the camp. Earlier this week, a judge in New York City ordered Michael Gruber of New City, N.Y., removed to Austria for similar reasons.

The case is part of OSI's ongoing efforts to identify U.S. citizens and residents who assisted in Axis-sponsored acts of persecution. Some 64 Nazi persecutors have been stripped of U.S. citizenship and 53 have been removed from the United States since OSI began operations in 1979. Nearly 250 persons are currently under investigation by OSI and seventeen persons are the subject of ongoing prosecutions around the country.

The case was prosecuted by the Department's Office of Special Investigations with the assistance of the United States Attorney's Office in St. Louis.

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