

The Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center's
Voices of Humanity Fundraiser Luncheon

Wednesday, October 29th 2008, Westin Seattle, 11:30-1:30

Honoring Leo D. Hymas
Concentration Camp Liberator and Speaker

Leo Hymas grew up on a farm in northern Utah. At 18, Mr. Hymas was drafted into the United States Army, trained as a heavy machine-gun operator and transferred to the 97th Infantry Division, 303rd battalion.

In 1945, Mr. Hymas landed in France where his division was assigned to General Patton's Third Army, which advanced into Germany and Czechoslovakia. Mr. Hymas was part of the American military team that liberated the Nazi concentration camp Buchenwald in April, 1945.



*Leo D. Hymas
Taken at home during first furlough - Oct. 1944*

Only 19 years old, Mr. Hymas was haunted for years by what he experienced inside the camp: 18,000 emaciated prisoners, crematoria, cramped barracks and Nazi guards who has "followed orders."

Mr. Hymas began telling students of his wartime experience in 1997 partly to come to peace with his memories, but also because a man at a conference once called Mr. Hymas' account a "myth of liberation."

He hopes people of all ages make the essential connection between the lessons of the Holocaust and the moral choices they face today.