

From: [Elizabeth Jones](#)
To: [Janet Wood](#)
Subject: FW: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)
Date: Thursday, December 17, 2020 11:16:28 AM

From: sunset@sunset.texas.gov On Behalf Of Texas Sunset Commission
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2020 10:28:24 AM (UTC-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada)
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Agency: TEXAS HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE COMMISSION

First Name: Nancy

Last Name: Bain

Title: Friend

Organization you are affiliated with: Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission

Email:

City: AUSTIN

State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or Opposed:

My father, Herbert U. Stern, is a decorated WW II veteran and also a German Jewish refugee who fled the Holocaust in 1936 for the USA. He introduced me to the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission (THGC) in 2014, when his Ninth Infantry Division (Army) Reunion was held in Houston. The annual memorial service for the Ninth Infantry Division was held at Houston's Holocaust Museum, and the service was organized by my family. Peter Berkowitz, the Chair of the THGC at the time, was invited to speak. His explanation of the importance of the THGC and the responsibility of educating Texans, young and old, on the history of the WW II Holocaust as well as other holocausts across the world, moved the audience of more than 75 people to tears. These veterans and their families understood why this organization was so important, and the link between them and the fight against such horrors. The THGC created the highly successful Texas Veteran Liberators Project as a vehicle for sharing important educational information in a personal format about the WW II Holocaust. The Project includes a digital application, an honor roll, a book and a traveling exhibit. My father is included in this project because his Ninth Infantry Division unit helped liberate Nordhausen Slave Labor Camp in Germany at the end of WW II. It was ironic and disturbing that my father, a Jewish refugee fleeing this horror, would become an American citizen and G.I. and liberate his fellow Jews in such a terrible place. On November 9th, 2017, my father, along with other Texas Liberator veterans and their families, and Texas residents who were Holocaust survivors or their family members, were honored at an incredible ceremony at the Texas State Capitol. Each veteran was asked to speak, each representative from a survivor family spoke, and members of the THGC and Texas Tech University (which published the book) also spoke. The most moving part of the ceremony was when the survivors or survivor family members each thanked one of the veteran liberators, or their family member, by placing a medal around their neck. For myself, my family and many of my friends who attended, this was overwhelming, beautiful and unforgettable. The ceremony ended with my father and the other veterans sitting on the Capitol steps while they watched an Air Force fly-over salute to them. To this day, no one who was present at this ceremony has forgotten it. In 2019, a friend contacted me to tell me that the Texas Veteran Liberators Project traveling exhibit was coming to Hutto High School near Austin, where I and my parents now live. I contacted Angela Hartman, the District Lead Librarian and Librarian for the secondary campuses who was coordinating the traveling exhibit at the high school, and I asked her if she would like to have my father come to speak. She was incredibly excited and agreed to set up a speaking date for him. On March 4th, 2019, my father gave a presentation to over 120 students and faculty members, explaining

the Texas Veteran Liberators Project and his own experiences, and answering questions.

Students and faculty not only applauded the presentation but came to him afterwards for discussion and photos. The traveling exhibit has touched the lives of countless students and faculty in high schools across Texas. My father continues to speak to church groups, school groups and senior living facilities about the Texas Liberators and his own experiences. The book is now in school libraries, senior living facility libraries, community centers and many private collections in Texas and around the country. Recently, the new Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum also honored the Texas Veteran Liberators Project and the THGC at a virtual ceremony as part of its opening celebration. Also, recently, my father, who is now 101 years old, gave another series of talks at the senior living facility in Cedar Park, TX where he lives in assisted living. The book was given to their library, but several residents and staff members also bought it.

These examples of the scope of the THGC's impact on education and community involvement throughout Texas affirm that it is a unique and vital resource for Texans of all ages. The veteran Liberators are now almost all gone, as well as most of the Holocaust survivors. That makes the work of the THGC all the more important for future generations, especially as we continue to see examples of intolerance and genocide, and Holocaust deniers, around the world. For my father and my family, the THGC remains invaluable.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency:

My father, Herbert U. Stern, is a decorated WW II veteran and also a German Jewish refugee who fled the Holocaust in 1936 for the USA. He introduced me to the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission (THGC) in 2014, when his Ninth Infantry Division (Army) Reunion was held in Houston. The annual memorial service for the Ninth Infantry Division was held at Houston's Holocaust Museum, and the service was organized by my family. Peter Berkowitz, the Chair of the THGC at the time, was invited to speak. His explanation of the importance of the THGC and the responsibility of educating Texans, young and old, on the history of the WW II Holocaust as well as other holocausts across the world, moved the audience of more than 75 people to tears. These veterans and their families understood why this organization was so important, and the link between them and the fight against such horrors. The THGC created the highly successful Texas Veteran Liberators Project as a vehicle for sharing important educational information in a personal format about the WW II Holocaust. The Project includes a digital application, an honor roll, a book and a traveling exhibit. My father is included in this project because his Ninth Infantry Division unit helped liberate Nordhausen Slave Labor Camp in Germany at the end of WW II. It was ironic and disturbing that my father, a Jewish refugee fleeing this horror, would become an American citizen and G.I. and liberate his fellow Jews in such a terrible place. On November 9th, 2017, my father, along with other Texas Liberator veterans and their families, and Texas residents who were Holocaust survivors or their family members, were honored at an incredible ceremony at the Texas State Capitol. Each veteran was asked to speak, each representative from a survivor family spoke, and members of the THGC and Texas Tech University (which published the book) also spoke. The most moving part of the ceremony was when the survivors or survivor family members each thanked one of the veteran liberators, or their family member, by placing a medal around their neck. For myself, my family and many of my friends who attended, this was overwhelming, beautiful and unforgettable. The ceremony ended with my father and the other veterans sitting on the Capitol steps while they watched an Air Force fly-over salute to them. To this day, no one who was present at this ceremony has forgotten it. In 2019, a friend contacted me to tell me that the Texas Veteran Liberators Project traveling exhibit was coming to Hutto High School near Austin, where I and my parents now live. I contacted Angela Hartman, the District Lead Librarian and Librarian for the secondary campuses who was coordinating the traveling exhibit at the high school, and I asked her if she would like to have my father come to speak. She was incredibly excited and agreed to set up a speaking date for him. On March 4th, 2019, my father gave a presentation to over 120 students and faculty members, explaining the Texas Veteran Liberators Project and his own experiences, and answering questions.

Students and faculty not only applauded the presentation but came to him afterwards for discussion and photos. The traveling exhibit has touched the lives of countless students and faculty in high schools across Texas. My father continues to speak to church groups, school groups and senior living facilities about the Texas Liberators and his own experiences. The book is now in school libraries, senior living facility libraries, community centers and many private collections in Texas and around the country. Recently, the new Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum also honored the Texas Veteran Liberators Project and the THGC at a virtual ceremony as part of its opening celebration. Also, recently, my father, who is now 101 years old, gave another series of talks at the senior living facility in Cedar Park, TX where he lives in assisted living. The book was given to their library, but several residents and staff members also bought it.

These examples of the scope of the THGC's impact on education and community involvement throughout Texas affirm that it is a unique and vital resource for Texans of all ages. The veteran Liberators are now almost all gone, as well as most of the Holocaust survivors. That makes the work of the THGC all the more important for future

generations, especially as we continue to see examples of intolerance and genocide, and Holocaust deniers, around the world. For my father and my family, the THGC remains invaluable.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree