

Miron Kolodzujezak

Tape 1

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Abstract

Miron Kolodzujezak was born June 8, 1930 in Gdynia, Poland, a port city on the Baltic Sea. He and his siblings attended Catholic grade school and gymnasium. The family was very religious and ran by the model of God, Country and Family. His father had his own business and they had a car and a chauffeur. When the war began in 1939, his father joined the Army and the rest of the family fled to Zamosc where the aunt lived and which was shortly occupied by the Germans. He saw the many Jews in the area wearing Jewish stars and being forced off the sidewalk when the SS appeared. His father returned from being a POW late '40 and they moved to Warsaw. They lived in an apartment across from the Ghetto and near a park and a hospital where Miron became altar boy at the chapel. By the time he was 12, he worked for the underground by being a scout and by making deliveries to the Ghetto. The resistance used pseudo-names and kept their activities secret. His father had a store that, supposedly, sold kitchen supplies but men came in the front and went out the back. There were prayer stations in their courtyard where they sang patriotic songs to keep their spirits up. He saw the ghetto on fire and the people being deported. Warsaw was bombarded in '44. He joined the Warsaw Uprising on August 1, 1944. Miron's siblings were also given secret orders. He and his siblings were in his father's company. His older brother with a cousin was on the other side of Warsaw and both were killed. Miron helped the fighters cross the river. Then he was assigned to crawl up to the highway and obtain ammunition from the Germans. Miron's father disappeared and was never found. Miron, his brother, Gustav and his sisters were taken prisoner by the Germans and were sent in a boxcar to Birkenau. Soon Miron and his brother were taken by train to Mauthausen and then to a jet engine factory to perform forced labor near Vienna. On Easter Sunday '45, he and his brother were lined up at 5 AM and marched back to Mauthausen. Miron was liberated May '45. He was happy that he survived as he felt a winner and did not talk about it as followed his family's wishes. He could not settle down after the war and was involved in the action committee against the Communists. In '48 he and another guy escaped to Sweden. There they applied for political asylum which was granted. Soon they decided they wished to go to the US so went as a stowaway on the SS Stockholm. When he arrived in the US, he went to immigration and asked for political asylum but was told his papers were forged. A congressman helped him remain here. He married an American woman so feels his children were exposed to both cultures. At the end of the interview, Miron and the interviewer exchanged documents from Auschwitz and Mauthausen.

Summary

00:00 Miron Kolodzujezak was born June 8, 1930 in Gdynia, Poland on the Baltic Sea. He was the youngest of five children. His father Florien was born in 1895 and his mother, Helena

was born in 1897. His oldest sister was Alexandra, born in 1922 and the next sister was Donate [PH], born around 1924, the oldest brother was Gustav, born around 1927 and the younger brother was Reniul [PH], born around 1928. His family came from Kakapos [PH], Poland in 1920 as they were building Gdynia as a port for Poland. It is west of Gdansk and part of the corridor they wanted to open to get to Gdansk. Gdynia was about 50 miles closer to the German border than Gdansk. Miron was brought up in a modern city where the port was the main industry as it became one of the largest in Europe.

- 05:00 It had a school for the Navy. Miron was nine years old when the War started. His father owned his own business and made a good living. His mother was a housekeeper. His apartment was similar to a condo. Later his father built a building that he wanted to develop into a vacation home. It had large grounds where his father kept Arab horses. The children attended Catholic grade school and gymnasium. His mother had some household help. She came from a well-to-do family. She had land in Ramba [PH], a little Polish city, but most of it was taken away when the land was divided. The family did not experience any hard times until '39. They had a car and a chauffeur. Miron attended the Sula (Erseline) Sisters School ran by nuns and a kindergarten run by other sisters. The family was very religious. They lived by the model of God, Country and Family. They were very proud of their Polish history. His father participated in all three wars.
- 10:00 The family very seldom discussed war though they studied the history of wars. There were many Polish people involved in wars so the family set it aside and did not feel victimized though sometimes they won and sometimes they lost. They were active in survival. He returned from the concentration camp and his mother said not to talk of it but it is better to talk about the future. He was full of hate when he returned and his mother said that if they taught you to hate, they won the war. Miron tried to turn off his feelings of hate. He had respect for his mother's wisdom. He was a mixed-up kid upon his return from the concentration camp and needed advice which he received from his mother. He forgave by using God as his model. He benefited by never feeling like a victim but like a winner as a survivor. In the concentration camp, he just thought, "You damn bastards, you will get it." He came out feeling like a winner. Later his unit met in Vienna outside the jet engine aircraft factory where they were in forced labor. There were buses of people whining and crying and his wife asked why he was smiling.
- 15:00 He replied that he was happy as he survived. The group had been transported from Mauthausen to this factory. Hitler was developing a small fighter airplane with an engine on top but never completed its development. Miron had an extremely good childhood even during the war as had loving close relationship with his family, uncles and aunts. He was scared of both parents. His mother was the matriarch and his father was strong and "no nonsense." When his father walked into his room, Miron stood up and kissed his hand. The birthday present for his parents consisted of reciting a long poem by the children. They were a happy family. He was closest to his oldest sister. He was the

youngest so he was a bit spoiled and mischievous. At the dining table, the family discussed school, friends and a little politics. Hitler gave speeches from 1938 to 1939.

- 20:00 Both parents spoke German and listened to the speeches and understood what was going on. They felt it would lead to war and did not want to discuss it. They also spoke about their activities and playing with animals. Miron studied Latin in grade school. They all took piano lessons. His parents starting planning as their town was in the middle of the corridor to Germany. They planned to move to another location and close up their property. They moved to Zamosc in southeastern Poland near Lublin. It was part of Russian Ukraine. His mother's sister, husband and family lived there. So they moved from northwest Poland to southeast Poland. They just took a few suitcases as hoped it was temporary. His father devised something. He made a bundle of family papers and jewels and buried it underground. The Germans took over their house and put aircraft artillery over it so their valuables were gone when they returned. After the war started, they stayed with the aunt and later got their own apartment in Zamosc. The war started on September 1, 1939 when they were in Zamosc. They had left home in June '39 when he was nine-years-old. Miron's father was fighting in the Army.
- 25:00 He had rejoined after they moved and listened to the radio. The family knew that he was an officer but had no clue where he was stationed. He was taken prisoner at the end of the war and escaped to rejoin his family in Zamosc. The invasion consisted of tanks and cavalry and they were unprepared so it only lasted 35 to 40 days. Their radio was turned on continually so they knew just when the war began. His mother was always calm and took care of things. She was involved in keeping the family in proper order. She was very giving and not frantic or complaining. They wondered what happened to the father. It was a dual situation when the Germans came in and the Russians joined on the east. Miron's family was close to the Russians and was worried. Zamosc was taken over by the Germans. It was the first time that Miron was exposed to a Jewish community as he came from an area with few Jews but Zamosc had many Hasidim. Tanks rolled in and columns of German soldiers marched into Zamosc and beyond. The Germans wanted to occupy territory before the Russians arrived. Shortly after the German arrival, his family moved into their own apartment in the market square near the government buildings.
- 30:00 Soon they saw German patrols and Jew wearing bands with a star on their arms. His first exposure to the Jewish situation was when he saw the SS walking and the Jews stepping off the sidewalk. It was the first time he saw the Jews being persecuted. Later he saw Jews being beaten as they did not get off the sidewalk quickly enough. Miron was 9 and ½ and had little understanding. He realized the Germans were sadistic and worried that today the Jews were harmed and tomorrow it could be the Poles. Some Polish politicians and community leaders disappeared. He saw three types of German military: the Wermacht who were drafted, the SS and the Gestapo who wore long leather coats. When he saw the Jews kicked around, his mother said he could be next but he thought it would

not happen to him. In mid-'40 his father showed up but was not working and spoke in German to Miron's mother. His father was treated well as a POW. Then his father starting taking trips to Warsaw which was 200 to 300 miles away. At the end of '40 the family took a train from Zamosc to Lublin to Warsaw with a few suitcases

- 35:00 In Zamosc, Miron only had home schooling using his aunt's books to study. He read a trilogy of Polish history. At one time Poland reached to the Black Sea but was divided by Russia and Austria. This built strong feelings of patriotism. They had moved to a small place in Zamosc. The aunt and uncle had three children including one son who was not healthy. They had a large apartment and the three sons slept in one bedroom. When Miron's family reached Warsaw, it was summer and they obtained an apartment. Schools were closed so schooling was done in people's basements. They lived just outside the Old City in a large apartment building with a courtyard. Across the field was the train station and the ghetto was being built on the other side. Close by was a park with an old fort and water. Near that was a big hospital and a little church where he became altar boy.
- 40:00 He served in Latin, collected money and later participated in the underground. The church was part of the hospital and had two rows of pews. Later, the Germans slaughtered all the patients of the hospital. The church served as the chapel for the hospital and also for the public. Streetcars were still running and people hung out of them and sometimes fell out of the windows. In '41 the Jews were forced to start building the ghetto. It was very large and had glass on the top. There was a wide avenue outside. There were two streetcar tracks, the sidewalk and then the ghetto. Sometimes Miron made deliveries to the ghetto. He would wait for the streetcar to arrive and whistle and move some bricks up to place the ammunition, small guns and papers and then put the bricks down. You are not told much in the underground so you can't do much damage if you are picked up. There was only the priest and Miron in the church. His contact for resistance activities was in the church. He was 12 and did not know what his father and siblings were doing. He was contacted in his apartment to be a scout.
- 45:00 The underground only used pseudo-names. He was told they were organizing a group of scouts and knew he was interested. Miron did not know how the contact knew that. There were six of them. His pseudo-name was Behunt [PH] (strong wind). Sometimes, outside of the church he found out what he was to do. They did everything as a group. They recognized ranks so knew how to deal with superiors. They learned how to shoot using a wooden gun and a bulls-eye on the wall. He learned to stabilize himself and they went to the woods to learn to march. The Nazis had guns and knives. The scouts used knives to get the guns from the Nazis. They would stick the soldier with a knife and he thought it was a gun. In this manner, Miron collected four or five knives. Since he was only 12, he got away with it as the Germans thought he was playing and were not scared of him. The older people in the underground collected the guns from the soldiers.

- 50:00 After the Wehrmacht had a few drinks, Miron succeeded in getting their weapon. He was not scared and thought it was exciting. Children can survive better than adults as they have no conception of reality. His biggest problem was that he could not talk about it to his mother or anyone else. They were afraid if they were tortured, they would talk. His sisters trained as nurses in the underground but he did not know it at the time. His father had a store that sold kitchen supplies but no one bought anything. Men walked it but did not walk out the same way as there was a back entrance. The store was a front to hold meetings and gather guns. The Gestapo stood around for hours and did not know the true situation. More soldiers appeared in Warsaw. His father never got caught and told Miron never to look at the store or go in. His sisters knew what was going on but did not tell him. Miron did not know the sisters' activities as never saw them do anything. They all took piano lessons.
- 55:00 The piano teacher was the contact with the underground. His sisters and brother got training. Miron's brother was killed when he was 16 years old on the Day of the Uprising. The older brother was in the regular Army and was probably trained to fight by the underground and in the concentration camp. Miron would stand in line for bread but by the time he got to the front of the line, there wasn't any. He does not know how his parents made a living. The underground prepared them to become soldiers. Children could do things that adults cannot perform. If the tanks on the road saw an adult body on the side of the road, the Germans would shoot but not if it was a child. The child would put a Molotov cocktail underneath them and fire would leap into the tank and the child would run away. It was dangerous for the child as he could get shot. The underground tried to disarm the soldiers. If a soldier got shot, the police would shoot up an entire area or pick up people and hang them. If an underground member was not at home at an appointed time, everyone was worried.
- 60:00 To this day, if his wife returns home late, Miron worries. His family survived the war whereas others did not. He feels they must have an angel on their back. The priest must have known what was going on but never indicated that he knew anything. Miron became an altar boy by passing a Latin test. It was the norm not to share information when you were in the underground. Perhaps some people shared information but not his family. He did not see many Jews in Warsaw. In '43 they started to burn down the ghetto. They had two philosophies: some said to be nice to the Germans so nothing worse will happen and others said not to fool yourself because everyone is going to die. The people in the ghetto had a radio and also obtained information from the underground. A group in the ghetto had guns and wanted to fight the Germans. From his courtyard, Miron could see the ghetto burning for two months. There were prayer stations outside many homes where they often sang patriotic songs in the afternoon to recharge their batteries. The station would have a Black Madonna with a Mother Mary picture which the Swedish invaders slashed. They lived near the Swedish area downtown.

- 65:00 The Poles were politically naïve and pushed too hard and would not stop. There was a portrait or figurine on the many prayer stations in the courtyards. There were bombardments close to '44 in Warsaw. The buildings were bombed down but the prayer stations remained which the people felt was a miracle. He could hear the people screaming from the ghetto and saw smoke and fire from his roof. He saw tanks and artillery attacking the ghetto and the people being evacuated. There were many bodies carried out by the Jewish prisoners. Miron was never inside the ghetto. He could hear yelling from within the ghetto when he was outside and he could smell smoke. There must have been a few thousand people inside. Miron knew they were going to a concentration camp and that they were being liquidated. His mother's brother was arrested and sent to Auschwitz. He was married to a German who could not have him released and he was killed in Auschwitz. Miron knew that leaders, priests and intellectuals were being liquidated. He learned this from his scout group in the underground. He did not obtain this information from his family. Some children printed pamphlets that had information about the war. Miron knew that the people being evacuated would be slaughtered. He distributed the pamphlets by throwing a batch in the streetcar and jumping off or leaving them on the street.
- 70:00 Miron would place the pamphlets on a placard or paint the information on street walls. The primary object was to drive the Germans crazy so the underground made signs that said, "We are going to get you." The scout group was told never to kill a German but just wound them so they would shoot the legs of the Germans. If one German was killed, they would kill many civilians in revenge. If many Germans were wounded, they would have to take the time to take care of them and the troops would be demoralized. The underground would cut the bullets which was not against the Geneva convention. They shot the Germans in their legs so they could not run and the SS will care for them. He never felt demoralized. Before the Uprising, there were less trolleys more German soldiers and scarcity of food and electricity. From '42 to '44 they had two hours of electricity a day. They had huge carbide lamps and made bombs out of the carbide. There was no coal and it was a cold winter. He would search for wood and pieces of coal. He was hungry but he survived.
- 75:00 They were careful of what they ate. They ate horsemeat which was sweeter than beef. It was obtained by killing the German horses. There were no eggs. They had no markets or stores. He had food coupons and went in line to get two loaves of bread. He stood in line at 4 AM and the bread line opened at 8 AM and, sometimes, there was no bread. Miron was healthy though hungry. They had potatoes that had been stored in the basement. He feels his mother must have been creative with the available food. He is still healthy. They would walk to the country or ride a bicycle but if a German saw you, the bicycle would be confiscated. Miron never tried to get to the country as he lived too far away. He does not know if people stole but there were criminal and underground tribunals. Life was

tough. If he was forced to sell intelligence to the Germans, he would be executed. If he was caught stealing, he would be turned over to the Polish police run by the Germans and arrested. Some Poles sold out so you had to be careful who you talked to. Most people were helpful and did anything for you they could by sharing and covering up for you. He tried to place stuff under the bricks and someone saw the police and covered him up.

80:00 If he was seen, he could have been caught. A total stranger helped him. In general, Miron felt that society was not demoralized but some may have been. Mostly the people had an uplifted attitude. Some sang Polish hymns a lot, "God protect Poland." He has less to offer than others as he was young. A person who was 10 years older would be more aware of attitudes. He did not play during those years; was never a teenager. After nine years old, Miron never played. His children said he was too strict as a parent. Miron educated himself. When you are old enough, you can do things. He skipped school knowledge. He feels he was never a child. He had an idea that the uprising was coming because of the situation between the Russians, the Germans and the exiled Poles. The underground got information from the government in exile. Władysław Sikorski ran the exiled government and was killed in a plane accident.

85:00 The exiled government was in Spain and they tried to visit those working in Italy. The plane crashed on takeoff and it was suspicious as people wanted to get rid of him and there were Russians on the plane. The Poles wanted to appease Moscow and knew the Russians were getting closer to Warsaw. They wanted to stop them at the Vistula River which divided Poland in half. The Russians had Polish armies on its Communist side and desired to rid themselves of other Poles. They were getting closer to the Germans. In July '41 he was told to prepare clothes at a moment's notice and get to a location without being noticed. He was told to appear on August 1, 1944 prior to 5 o'clock at an address at one side of Warsaw from Praga, Warsaw, the other side. Miron's siblings got orders that they did not discuss. Miron walked over the bridge to Praga and met the underground at a stairway of an apartment. Other people arrived wearing AK armbands as their ID and the uprising began at 5 PM.

90:00 Miron had anticipated the uprising. He did not have a gun. Suddenly he heard an explosion in Warsaw and their side was quiet. The Russians stopped and the Germans started withdrawing troops. All the bridges over the river were closed so the people could not come across. Suddenly in the building, Miron saw his father and siblings. He did not realize that he was under his father's company. His other brother with a cousin were in another part of Warsaw. That brother got killed. The cousin that the brother lived with was Tom Pochinsky [PH] Nothing was happening so they waited. They were near the highway jammed with German soldiers. Miron joined the others on the other side. It was the first time that he found out he was in his father's group and was proud of it. His father was the officer in charge. Other things came in place. His two sisters and a brother were in a different apartment building and all converged into one stairway. They thought they

were trying to find their way back but a historical account indicated it took a number of days.

95:00 People were in the apartments. If one soldier was shot, everyone would be affected. They were close to the Russians on one side of the Vistula River and Germans were on the other side. Miron and an older guy walked to the river and found a kayak and a boat. They decided that Miron would be left there and the older guy go across and signal them with the flashlight. He sat in the marsh with mosquitoes. It was built to defer floods. Miron saw a few Germans walking back so he tried to fix things between them. Meanwhile his father organized a group of 30 people to get across to the other side which took two to three days. One boat went back and some had hand guns. All of them reached one side and crossed over the area to open fields. They ran to secure the area with the uprising and got under fire. They zigzags around and most of them made it. Miron watched as soldiers in front of him were running and saw him take an artillery shell in his body. It was the first time that he realized it was serious. He walked to the old fort which was the headquarters for Oaza [PH] and became part of the battalion. His father was assigned to the perimeter around the fort. He was assigned to a villa and field which led to a highway. The Germans were around the highway but not near them. His squad was to crawl to the highway and transport at night to pick up Germans and get them going and return to the villa in daylight. That's how he got ammunition.

100:00 A few men had rifles and ammunition. They picked up people and the Germans started bombarding as they realized they were being attacked. Miron got bombarded and heard portable rockets about 5 or 6 feet long sounding like cows. There were 12 to 60 rockets on the truck that was bombarding them. If he heard sound, that means it missed the people but hit the houses. Later diving planes bombarded the area. Each house held 6 or 7 people. He retrieved casualties, some had amputations performed with a knife. His sisters were in the area and worked as nurses. The uprising went on for a few days and he knew that it would be stopped as they were blocking a highway. The Russians made a cease-fire with the Germans who took them as prisoners. There was a major battle for a couple of days. The Germans came in and saw them running and some had guns. They tried to evacuate to the fort behind them. He had a German helmet from the garden and went into a house. There was a bright explosion and he got hit on the head and his helmet fell off and he got shrapnel. He hit his head and got into the basement. Some guys tried to get out of the window and the Germans saw them and they put their hands up to surrender.

105:00 Miron's brother, Gustav and his sisters were taken prisoner. His father withdrew and was never seen again. Miron saw a grave with his father's name but he is not in it. His father was thought to have been captured and hung by the Russians. Miron was told that his father tried to escape so they hung him. In the beginning of the war, the Russians caught 10,000 officers and took the soldiers into the Russian Army and killed the officers. Miron went to the railroad tracks where a woman was crying. A car came and the driver went up

to the woman who thought she would be killed and he said he was not killing her. He told her to be brave and she will be taken as a POW. They left and the SS came and everyone was put in a boxcar and taken to Birkenau. They separated the men from the women. Miron's brother was in the boxcar. There were 80 people with no food or water. Some died during the three days on the train. The uprising lasted 63 days to late September so it was probably late August when they got captured. They reached a gate and were taken out of the train.

110:00 Those who were sick, old and injured were placed in one line and taken away and the rest who looked like they could work were taken to a place to be stripped, showered, tattooed, shaved, pained with sheep dip to eliminate lice and their name and DOB were recorded. The sheep dip burned and was applied by the capos. Some of the capos were more brutal than the SS. They took this position to save their lives but were usually murdered later. The Germans were sadists. Some of the capos were Jews. The prisoners slept eight to a bed, head to foot. They worked outside. Their barracks was near an electrified fence and where the burned bodies were kept. Some of the people were burned alive. They used dogs to run after the people. The prisoners were mostly Jews. There were no crematories. Gypsies, Jehovah Witnesses and Russians were eliminated. 39 of 316 prisoners had no tattoo in Mauthausen as they had no time. Trains came in continually. Some prisoners went directly to the gas chambers and crematorium and other were gunned down. The final solution was in full effect. He knew the war would be over soon. Two weeks after arrival they had a daily count, one meal a day, work on the roadway and were counted again.

115:00 If the prisoner was found talking or not working hard enough they would be beat up so he was bruised a lot. He was caught talking or picking up stones that were too small. Once attention focused on you, they would keep noticing you. He was told he was going to Mauthausen. He was placed in a train which took five days with no food or water. Also, they got bombarded. Some of the prisoners hoped they would get hit but he did not. At Mauthausen, he was assigned an easier sleeping area and a 16 hour work day in the quarry. There were 186 steps of uneven stone to march up and down with a crate on his back, making six or eight trips a day. About six prisoners went up at a time. Some committed suicide by jumping into the quarry. There was an underground factory near Switzerland with tall mountains. He arrived in January and got sick so stopped work and was transported to Vienna to work in the Henkel factory where he had his own barrack and worked with civilians. It was still dangerous. He was smaller than the others so had to crawl out the tail and tighten bolts for jet action. If he did not make it tight enough, the plane could crash. They had an air raid and the soldiers and civilians went into a special cage but the prisoners had to lay in the open.

120:00 He got sick with a high fever and breathing problems. There was no hospital so he went to the infirmary and the soldier gave him aspirin and he asked if he could stay a few days.

He was placed in a back room and returned to his barracks as those in the infirmary were never seen again. The infirmary was just there for the International Red Cross to view. Miron's brother was in the same area. He and his brother had close numbers so were sent together. On Easter Sunday '45, they were lined up at 5 AM and marched back to Mauthausen. It was 300 to 400 kilometers through the mountains and across the Danube River. He heard guns. The Russians were approaching and the Germans did not want to leave them in Vienna as they were working on secret projects. They were about 1800 people. They wore wooden shoes and took their blankets. The wooden shoes resounded on the cobblestones. They had been given coffee in the morning and soup at night. They slept on the ground in the snow. There was a line of trucks behind them and if they sat down, they would be shot and cremated at Mauthausen. There were only 280 prisoners left from the 1800. Once he had to help his brother stay upright. The march was called the Death March. Sometimes they only stopped from midnight to 5 AM. They were starving. They arrived in Mauthausen and things had changed. In a few days the SS told them to clean up the barracks and the Red Cross came from Switzerland and negotiated with the Germans.

125:00 There was no more work, food was scarce, the capos had disappeared. Their capos found a dead body and put on the prisoner's uniform and went to another section where they were not known so would not be killed. Some Americans arrived. He met a doctor from New York. He rescued Mauthausen and visited him where he saw the photos he had taken of bodies and skeletal prisoners. Many prisoners died after the surrender as they no longer had motivation as they were rescued and freed. The soldiers gave them rations and they got sick. Butter made Miron sick for three days. There was still fighting. There were not enough medics. The survivors ate roots and grass. He and his brother walked back to Czechoslovakia then to Breslau (now Wroclaw, Poland) to his aunt where they had a shower and food. They did not know where the father and sisters were. Later they found the sisters had been at a camp where they were in experiments on. Yanka, the younger, had her kidney removed for the experimentation and went to Sweden where she died. His older sister died a few years later.

130:00 Rainal was supposed to establish a communication center. There were no signs of Germans and all of a sudden, they were ambushed. They were machine-gunned at the shower place. Rainal and his cousin, Vishnov Goshaky [PH] were found embraced in a grave. The other person got lost and could not meet them. He spent the rest of his life doing research as he felt he should have died with them. The church that listed all the names shut down. The Russians found German atrocities. Renuil [PH] was 16. Their names were carved in stone on a monument and their picture was displayed in the church. The church is in Prague, Warsaw and the plaque names the people defending Poland including his father's name. The grave is located near the summer area for kings. People

in Poland including a female professor of geology spend a lifetime documenting the atrocities in Poland. There are books with testimonial.

135:00 Miron found his brother's and his father's graves the first time he returned to Poland on the 45th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising. He could not go earlier as he was at the Naval Academy and then at MIT for engineering and recently a PhD in psychology. Miron could not go while the Communists were still there and they would hold him. He has assurance that both his father and brother are dead. During the 65 days of the Warsaw Uprising, 300,000 people died and 6 million Poles died during the war. In the Holocaust final solution, huge amounts of Polish lives were lost. The Russians probably lost more. Gypsies, 7th Day Adventists, homosexuals and even SS were killed. Some prisoners thought that he should work as the capo assistant to distribute bread in the morning but he was only 14 and did not do it. Conservatism, philosophy and learning his cultural and moral standing influenced him. He felt terrible for the Jews as they died just because they were Jews as the Russians died just because they were Russian. He knew if he was caught, he would pay the price.

140:00 At 14, he was mature. He was arrested September '44 and liberated May '45. He was the same person afterwards but more so. The way the Germans behaved and fortified by the atrocities in the prison camp did not hurt him but increased his strength. Miron thanks God for the way his parents brought him up with this philosophy. At 83 he can still do things and does not know when to stop. He was bleeding and did not know it. Maybe he should talk to a psychologist. His son is a psychologist and is respectful. His children are Greg Conrad and Vanda Helene (after his mother). After they found his aunt, they went to his house that was locked up. The Russians got into it. Three bombs hit the house but only incurred outside damage. The Russians placed horses on the 3rd floor and removed the toilets. His mother gathered horse blankets and took them to the Baltic Sea to wash and trade for food. He was happy his sisters returned. His mother did not talk about her experiences. It must have been painful for her to see her husband and five children go to war.

145:00 She lost two of them, two were sick and he is a little crazy. His mother taught him not to be angry. His brother went to Medical School and became a doctor. His older sister got a job to support the family. The younger sister went to school and married a restoration architect. He went to school but did not study much and did not work hard. He did not settle down so his mother sent him to school for a year run by monks. There was a lot of singing and praying which helped him settle down. He was involved in the action committee against the Communists and once got caught and in the YMCA where he learned sailing. The Germans threw grenades into sailboats and he got one and learned to sail. One guy got caught and thought he would talk. In '48 he and the guy escaped to Sweden. They got a professional woman and gave the guard vodka and put him on a rowboat. It was less windy in the morning and they saw a patrol boat. He had a compass

in his hand and waved to the patrol boat and told them they got lost during the night and were told to go to the left. They went through Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia in Russian waters. Another boat was sent after them as they were escaping and would need a plane to sink them. The next day a storm came and the pursuing boat by the American UNRRA sank and they came around Ireland and found a fishing village in Sweden and were taken to the west side of Sweden to an old fort.

150:00 There they applied for political asylum and was granted and worked there. They decided they wished to go to the US as the guy had family in England and he had family in Milwaukee. They went to Goteborg and got passage to America. They were supposed to take anybody for 25 days but would not take him to America so we went as a stowaway on the SS Stockholm. When he arrived in the US, he went to immigration and asked for political asylum. He went to Ellis Island and was told his papers were forged. He said they are not forged and asked representative Wiley from Wisconsin to release him. It was over 90 days so they sent him back to Poland. Miron believed that the man in charge of immigration was a Communist and later was imprisoned. The Congressman found out and Miron was saved. If you have international papers for asylum, you should be accepted for 90 days so you can file an application to remain.

155:00 An officer of the ship said that Miron would be sent back as he did not follow US law. Things were inconsistent between the State Department and the government. He worked in research with metals for American jet fighters and needed clearance and the State Department tried to deport him. Miron received citizenship after 15 years. After Vanda was born, he was notified that he was being deported. He told his children more than he told his parents told him about past politics. He wanted to explain his disposition. His wife was born in the US from a different culture and disposition which was in conflict to his European culture. His children were exposed to both cultures so he thought he should explain. He is overly-disciplined. He was a heavy smoker and said that he would stop smoking if his son stops something. He smoked 5 packs a day and would awaken in the middle of the night to smoke but did not. His children are strong and well-disciplined and had a good childhood. He was taught God, Country and Family.

160:00 God is not serving a specific religion. Laws today came through religious setting. Otherwise, we would be animals. God is not responsible for Mauthausen. God can teach us to be human and to respect one another. Country – is to know who you belong to. Now he belongs to America but he cares for the old country. He looks around and it looks like Poland years ago. If you ignore what is happening, you don't know what will occur. It is similar to what happened in the 1930s. You need something bigger than yourself; that is Country. Kennedy said, "Do not ask what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." You need that but people don't care. Poland is doing better now than other European countries. Family – is desperately needed. The first breakdown of society is from family disunity.

165:00 As you are born and grow, you learn from your family about the value of life. Now the responsibility is turned over to the outside, to teachers, friends and politicians. If you want to have a healthy self and healthy nation, you need to have a healthy family to inculcate healthy values up to age 14, a formative age. He saw a child about 1 and ½ years old given a toy to keep quiet as his mother was reading. People have the mentality to give their children toys instead of attention. His mother met his sisters every Friday and came home when he was taking a bath and was worried. Miron had respect for his parents which was beneficial.

170:00 (Interviewer talked) She opened the Pandora's box. You can talk too much. If you say too much, can be less constructive for learning. If you convert one or two people, can be beneficial. Miron feels he said all he wanted. (He shows his prisoner ID card.) He was 35 days at the Warsaw Uprising. He was a school kid when he went to Mauthausen November 8, 1944. (The interviewer gives Miron documents from Auschwitz and Mauthausen that were discovered.) Today they found documents from the ITS (International Tracing Service) about him and his brother. He never expected they would find so much. There are lists from the time he was a prisoner. It reaffirms what he stated about being in a concentration camp. Many did not believe him as he was not tattooed due to being a political prisoner. The Polish Authority gave him proof which was the first solid confirmation that showed he was in Auschwitz and transferred to Mauthausen. Now these documents cannot be questioned. He is surprised.

175:00 He did not want to talk much as people were skeptical but now the documents make it concrete. He is not making imaginary statements. He never did an interview before except for a presentation in 2008 at his granddaughter's college class on Auschwitz. He is donating a copy of it to the Holocaust Museum. There is so much on TV to find out about your background. It is wonderful to find out what your father's grandfather went through the war. The first photograph shows the stone monument at the graveside built after the war with the names of people ambushed and machine-gunned by the Germans at the Warsaw Uprising. Some were 16-years-old. They should have been treated as POWs. His brother and cousin are in the second photo. On the top row, second from the right is his brother and second from the left is his cousin. Altogether 30 were killed.

181:00