

He tells me we can do it. This is a United States--

I didn't do anything wrong.

You won't do a thing wrong. I know you won't.

They put me in jail.

No, no, no.

Because--

This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mr. Lucian Pawlowski.

Yeah.

On May 24, 2019 in Fort Pierce, Florida.

Yes.

Thank you, Mr. Pawlowski for agreeing to speak with us today to share your story and to let us know something of your experiences.

OK.

I'm going to start with very basic questions.

Yes.

And then we go from there, OK?

All right.

And the first part I'll ask you about is a lot of questions about life before World War II-- absolutely before. So my first one is can you tell me the date of your birth? When were you born?

May 17, 1925.

May 17th, 1925.

Yeah.

And today is May 24th, so you just had a birthday. Happy birthday.

Thank you.

OK, and when you were born, what was your name at birth? Is it the same as now?

Yeah, the same. Lucian.

Lucian.

Lucian.

Did you have a baptized name, too? A middle name?

I think so. This I don't remember baptizing me. But my name was from the beginning Lucian.

No middle name.

No. Lucian Pawlowski.

OK. That's a last name.

OK.

First, Lucian.

All right, Lucian.

Lucian Pawlowski. And you were born in May 17th, 1925.

1925 in Lublin.

In Lublin.

Yeah, Lublin.

For those people who don't know, tell us where is Lublin?

Pardon?

Where is Lublin? Lublin is in the middle of Poland. That's what you can say.

Is it far from Warsaw?

Not very far from Warsaw.

No?

No.

OK.

Yeah, Vilnius is very far from Warsaw.

Yes.

Yeah, but not Lublin.

Not Lublin.

No.

OK, so tell me. Were you the only child or did you have brothers and sisters?

No, I have my brother. He was killed during the action during the war.

We'll talk about that in a bit.

Yeah.

What was your brother's name?

Leonard.

Leonard.

Yeah.

Was he was he older or younger?

Older.

He was older than you.

Yeah.

When was he born? What was the year that he was born?

He died a long time ago. So I'm thinking I don't know any better something like that.

How about was he a year older or two years older than you? Do you know how much older than you he was?

Oh, he was about five years older than I.

Oh, so he might have been born in 1920.

Yeah, oh, I think so.

1920, 1921?

But he was-- I started to go to gymnasium, and he was finishing already.

OK. OK, so he was your big brother.

Yeah. Lyceum He was going to Lyceum.

OK.

At the [NON-ENGLISH], the gymnasium.

We'll talk about those things, but right now I want to find out more about your family. And tell me. What was your father's name?

Lucian Pawlowski.

So you were named after you father?

Yeah, yeah

OK.

And do you know what year your father was born?

No.

No?

He was older than I am.

Yeah. Yeah. But do you think he was born in the 20th century or already in the 19th century?

I think 19.

Ah ha.

Yeah.

He was born-- OK.

Yeah, because that's was-- he was about 40 years older than I am.

So he was not a young man when he had you-- when you were born.

What?

Your father was not so young when you were born.

No. I don't think so.

Did he serve in World War I? Was he in the--

He served in World War I.

Yeah?

Yeah.

Under which army? And whose army was he?

I wouldn't tell you exactly.

You don't know.

No, I don't remember.

Probably some Polish army. That's all.

OK.

Or if not, then they're French or English-- against the German, of course.

But you don't know which army he would have been part of.

No, I don't think I can remember.

OK.

Maybe I knew, but I forgot about it.

OK. Now what about your mother? What was her name?

Rosalia.

Rosalia.

Yeah.

And her maiden name?

Mordzinska.

Mordzinska?

Yeah.

Ah ha. Were your parents both from Lublin?

Pardon?

Were your parents from Lublin? Had they been born themselves in Lublin.

No, they were born in Poland-- some part.

You know, but in Lublin. Were they from the same place that you were born?

I don't know. I don't-- my father was born in Warsaw. And mother was not very far from it, but from I don't know-- from the place.

OK.

Yeah.

Did both of them have brothers and sisters?

No. Just brother.

That's for you.

Yeah, only one brother.

OK, and your father. Did he have brothers and sisters-- your father?

Yes, he had. But we were living in Vilnius, and they living in Warsaw.

I thought you--

His brother.

I thought you lived in Lublin?

Pardon?

I thought you were born in Lublin.

Yeah.

OK.

Yeah.

Did you grow up in Lublin?

Yeah, no.

Oh.

Oh, I was living over there, but then father was transferred to Vilnius.

What was the--

Because he was a police officer-- high-ranking police officer.

Oh, I see. I see. And what kind of duties did your father have?

What kind of what?

Responsibilities. What did he do as a high-ranking--

Well, he was the commissar. That meant he had about 50 policemen under him.

OK. OK. Was he like a police chief?

Yeah, that's right. Yeah.

And was he a police chief in Lublin? I don't remember that. I was too young to know.

OK, and do you remember when-- how old you were when you moved to Vilnius?

About 12, 13 years old.

OK, so that would have been 1937, 1938.

I went to the powszechna gymnasium.

What is powszechna ?]

Powszechna that mean that everybody goes, you know-- 1, 2, 3.

Like elementary school?

Yeah. Pardon?

Elementary school. The first school-- grade school.

Yeah. Elementary. That was the elementary school. And then after I finish elementary school I went to gymnasium.

OK. That's high school.

Let's stay with elementary school. How many years did elementary school last? How many grades were there?

Two.

Two?

Two only, because I was taken by Russians to Russia.

That's in gymnasium, right?

Pardon?

That's when you were in high school.

Yeah, yeah.

I'm talking in grade school. When are you in grade school, how many years did that last?

Seven. Seven or eight, something like that.

OK.

Yeah, seven, eight. Yeah.

OK, was your family well off?

Pardon?

Was your family well off? Did you did your father make a lot of money being a police chief?

Probably did. Yeah. He had his own car.

He had his own car.

Yeah. And not his, but--

OK.

It was the company's. He got to use it. He was using it.

OK. Do you know whether he was-- was he a police chief for all of Vilnius or part--

No, no, part of the Vilna. Vilnius was divided maybe before four parts like this, or 3 parts. So he was one of the parts in the middle of Vilnius.

So he was in the center.

Yeah, Mickevichius gatve.

Oh, so you're saying on the central street?

Yeah.

And what was the name of that street? The center street?

Tatarska.

Tatarska. And you mentioned another one. Mickevich?

Yeah. Mickevichius gatve

That's in Lithuanian. Mickevichius gatve. How would you say it in Polish?

Ulica Mickiewicza

Yeah. And was this where his precinct was? Where was your father's precinct? You know, the place he went to work?

In Polish.

No, no, no, no. My question is do you know the street where your father had the police station?

Tatarska and Mickevicius.

OK.

Street.

OK.

Tatarska and Mickevicius gatve.

Let's cut the camera for a second. Now we can roll. OK, so I just spoke with your wife and daughter, and they told me that your father's first name was Ludvig. Is that right?

No, no. Lucian.

Lucian was your father's name?

Yeah, mine.

That's your name.

Yeah, my name.

Yeah. Your father?

Lucian Pawlowski.

And your papa? Your papa's name?

Pawlowski.

And his first name was Ludvig?

Lucian, too.

OK.

I don't know why they do it, but what I can do.

OK, all right. We'll--

I couldn't do nothing about it.

All right, they say it was Ludvig. You're saying your father's name was Lucian.

Yeah.

It's OK.

Yeah.

We'll go forward.

My brother was Leonard. Leonard.

OK.

Older brother.

The one who was--

So we had-- I had a brother, but he got killed during the action.

So your father's in Vilnius where you lived.

Yeah.

Your father's police station where he worked was at the corner of Mickiewicz and Tatarska.

Tatarska, yeah.

Did you ever visit him there at the police station?

He was working next door.

Oh, so you lived right next door.

Because he was-- his office and the police was on the first floor, but on the right. And we were on the left. Something like it. Then he was on the left, I was on the right.

OK.

Anyway.

Do you remember the number? Mickiewicz number what?

I don't know.

That's OK.

I really forgot about this.

That's OK.

I should remember, but-- 12? Not very far from the church.

From the cathedral.

Cathedral.

Yeah.

You know, not very far.

Actually, I know exactly what you're talking about. That corner-- this is a main street.

Main street-- Mickievichius gatve to the church. Cathedral-- big cathedral. Remember that? Oh, yeah. Beautiful.

So you were about 12 or 13 when you moved there from Lublin.

Yeah.

OK, and tell me about the kind of place you lived in in Vilnius. What was the apartment like? What did it look like?

One part was my father's office. The other part was our bedrooms and dining room and bedrooms.

OK, and was this--

Two bedrooms, and then the kitchen and corridor to the kitchen. Yeah. That's a beautiful place. Yeah.

Was it--

Balcony-- small balcony.

You had a small balcony? Excuse me, can we cut?

Yes. Did the dog-- so was this a building that was built in the 19th century-- the place you lived? Did it have high ceilings, was it stone? What floor did you live on?

On second floor.

OK, and I take it you had indoor plumbing and electricity?

Yeah, oh yeah. Beautiful. Yeah, of course.

OK, how was the place heated?

piec

Oh, those kinds of ovens? The coal--

About two or three of them.

So it was with coal?

During the cold, you have to put the coal in and stir it up to keep warm. You know how cold it was.

It's in the north, so it can get pretty cold.

It's cold.

Yeah.

Really beautiful, though, the [SPEAKING POLISH].

So you're talking about the kind of ovens that were there. There are these tiled ovens. Is that what you're talking about?

The what?

The way you heated. The place you heated. You'd put something-- some coal inside. Not me. there was somebody else to do it.

OK.

I didn't do it.

OK, did your mother have help in the house?

Yeah.

OK.

Of course.

Well, what kind of help did she have?

The lady that cook everything, and mother help her. Not much, but anything-- that's it.

Were there any other servants?

No, just in the kitchen-- the lady. Polish lady, of course. And then my mother together. For dinners, yes. Breakfast, nothing [INAUDIBLE].

So your father, he had an office in his apartment where you lived.

Yeah.

And right next door was the police station.

Yeah.

OK.

Yeah, that was the one building. See? On lower was police officer and the jail, and then on the first floor there was father's office. Yeah, and our bedrooms and dining rooms and kitchen.

Did you ever see anybody in the jail?

No.

No?

I was in jail.

Yeah, that's later. That's later. But when you would go-- when you would see your father in the police station, paint for me a picture of what it looked like. When you'd go in there, what would you see?

Very nice gentlemen.

Yeah?

Handsome, very nice gentlemen.

What kind of--

Good father.

Yeah?

Oh, yeah.

I love him.

What kind of a personality--

I love him. My mother was beautiful, too.

Yeah?

Yeah.

What kind of personality did your father have?

Very strong.

Well, I would think.

Oh, yeah. I had to be careful.

Yeah?

Just in case I didn't do it.

Oh, really?

Oh, yeah.

Was he a strict guy?

Yeah, but I don't have any problem. Yeah.

And your mother, what kind of personality did she have?

She was very quiet. She was good [INAUDIBLE], because she died. She-- in Russia.

I know. We'll talk about this.

When they take us to Siberia, she died over there, because there was no medication for her. They didn't have any medication. She had the medication from home, finish, died. That's it.

Tell me what was she like as a person.

Very nice. Very mother.

Yeah?

I love her very much.

Was she quiet?

Pardon?

Was she a more quiet person?

Very. No, I didn't hear her hollering.

OK.

No, I don't remember.

OK. OK, we'll come--

Maybe sometimes in the kitchen, but that was not my business.

Which one were you closer to-- mother or father?

Father.

Yeah?

Yeah. Well, I saw mother every time, but father not so often. He usually was busy as an officer,

Did he ever--

--because he was high-ranking officer. He got about 30 or 40 policemen under his command.

Did you ever go with him when he was working?

No.

Did he ever talk about--

I go with him, but when he went fishing.

When you went fishing, not working.

That's a day-- only one time that I could go with him.

And your brother-- did your brother-- he's was older?

Yeah, he was going higher to the high school-- very high school. He was-- no. But he died.

And where did you go to school?

Pardon?

Where did you go to school?

In Vilnius, yeah.

Yeah, what was the name of your school?

Mickevicius

Also Mickevicius?

No, no wait a minute. I can't remember now exactly. Mickevicius? Something like this. Yeah.

Was it a public school?

Public, yeah. Yeah.

Did you walk there?

Yeah.

Did you walk to school?

Yeah, walk. It's not very far from my place to the gymnasium.

No, OK.

To the school, to the gymnasium.

And you don't remember the name?

The name of the gymnasium. Something like Slowadska or Mickiewicz. Something like this.

OK, do you remember the street it was on?

The what?

Do you remember the street it was on?

Niemecka.

Ah.

Niemecka and the other that was going this way.

OK.

Niemecka here and there next.

OK, Niemiecka So that's--

Slowadskego. something like that. A long time ago.

I know. But if it was on the Niemiecka Street, did you--

Niemecka ja, ulica, Niemiecka welka, Slowadskego Tatarska.

How long would it take you to get to school-- to gymnasium from your home?

About 15 minutes walking. Running mostly.

Yeah, well, it's a small city. You can get many places in not so much time.

Had to go upstairs a little bit and then go to the gymnasium.

Yeah. Now did you pass through the Jewish quarter when you would go to school? Did you pass through the Jewish quarter?

No.

No?

No. Jewish quarters were not very far from where we were living, but it's a different street. I don't remember it now. Not very far. Oh, yeah. There was a lot of Jewish over there.

Yeah?

Yeah, good guys.

All business.

Did you go shopping in the Jews quarter?

Yeah. They only-- there were Jewish stores everywhere in Vilnius. Maybe some.

Did you have any kids in school who were-- when you went to school in gymnasium--

Oh, yeah. They come from Trakai. You know Trakai?

Yeah.

That's where there was the lake-- this beautiful lake I used to go to him during vacation.

Did you?

Yeah, swimming and fishing. And we had a boat, so we can use the boat.

So this was outside of town-- outside of Vilnius a little bit. And it's an old castle called Trakai now and Troki in Polish.

Yeah.

But I was asking about in your classroom. Were all the kids Polish?

Yeah, all Polish.

OK.

Well, not exactly, no. But they speak Polish.

They speak Polish.

Yeah. I think Ukrainian or something like that.

Were there Jewish kids in your school?

Not in my class. I don't remember. Maybe.

You don't remember.

Who knows.

You don't remember.

The class was about 35 people.

That's a lot.

Yeah. It's big.

It's a lot. What did I want to ask now? Were there any Lithuanians in your class?

No, I don't think. Next to us they there was the Lithuanian school.

So were there different schools according to whether--

Yeah, I was going to the Polish, but they had a Lithuanian school, too.

OK.

Yeah.

OK, and what about-- did Jews have a separate school as well?

Yeah.

What about the Jewish people?

Jewish-- I remember them praying. That's all what I can remember. In the street they had a house over there and a big place so they go and pray over there.

Well, near your school on Niemiecka Street.

No, not very far. Not too far.

There was some place called the Great Synagogue-- a very large synagogue not far from your school street.

I don't think it was synagogue, but I remember them-- they always pray.

They always were praying.

Over there. Maybe it was, but I didn't care about it.

OK.

I had a good friend-- Jewish.

Did you?

Very good.

What was his name?

Motek.

Motek.

Motek. Oh, yeah. Very nice guy.

Did he live in your building?

Pardon?

How did you get to meet him?

In school, in this, ja.

OK, do you remember Motek's last name?

No. Very nice guy. We always play together.

How old were you when you became friends with him?

Much younger than now.

Maybe 15 or 12, something like this.

Do you know what happened to Motek No.

You don't.

No, because we moved to Vilnius.

OK.

And then in Vilnius there was some Jews, but I never saw them.

So I thought--

There was a-- it was a street-- Niemiecka. And they were living over there having stores. Mostly the stores. Jews-- that's all what they had. But nice guys. They were very nice guys. I like matzo. Remember matzo.

Yeah.

Very good. Every time they brought to us.

Yeah?

Yeah, because my father was police high-ranking officer. So they would bring the good matzo.

Did your father ever talk about what was going on in his work when he came home?

No. No, never.

No?

No.

He never talked about--

He always talking about if I did something wrong.

Really?

Then, you know. But he was very good. My mother, too. They loved each other. Very nice.

You had a radio at home, yes?

Pardon?

You had a radio at home? Did you have a radio?

Radio? Sure.

Did you have a telephone?

Yes. My father had it all.

OK.

The telephone. Radio, telephone.

Where did you get most of your news from? Where did your family get most--

Radio. From the radio.

From the radio?

Yeah.

OK.

Just radio. No television.

No. Did your father read newspapers?

Yeah.

Was there any particular newspaper he read?

I don't remember what kind of, but he always read some papers. Yeah.

OK, was your father political at all?

What?

Did your father have political views?

I guess so. Do you know--

But I can't tell you what kind, but he was very, very good guy, and they liked him very much-- all the policemen that I remember.

Oh, did they really?

Yeah.

Can we cut for a second?

[INAUDIBLE]

OK. What did your father think of Marshal Pilsudski?

I don't know. How can I know?

OK, so he never talked about him? Well, everybody loved Pilsudski. He built that Poland.

Yeah.

Yeah. Jozef Pilsudski. Marshal Jozef Pilsudski.

Do you remember when he died?

Oh, yeah. That was terrible. When he died, he was going on the train, so we go over there and waited for him to pass it.

Really?

With the-- yeah. Yeah, where he was laying. Because they took him. I don't know where to. I don't remember. But forever he must go to Krakow, maybe, or some place like that.

I think so.

Yeah.

Were you living in Lublin when he died or in Vilna?

No, in Vilna.

OK.

Yeah, in Vilna.

OK, well, his mother is--

Pardon?

His mother is buried in Vilnius in the Rasu cemetery. Pilsudski's mother.

My mother?

No, no, no. Pilsudski's mother.

Oh, Pilsudski's mother.

Is buried in Vilna from what I know.

He was a little bit north of-- Pilsudski-- north of Vilnius.

Yeah.

Yeah. I wish I go to Vilnius again.

So tell me.

Kalbek lietuviskai!

That means to speak in Lithuanian.

No, I speak-- I was working in the restaurant, and I had to run. I was about 14, 15, 16, and I was working, because we didn't have the money, you know?

We'll come to these moments. Right now I'm still talking about life before the war.

Yeah.

So I want to ask you-- over the radio, did you hear about what was going on in the wider world? About what's going on with Poland? What's going on with Germany? What's going on with Russia? Did people talk about these things?

Yeah, well nobody wanted to have the war, you know?

Were people talking about War?

They were talking, of course, but what you can do? They were fighting. Yeah.

Do you remember your father talking about what would happen if there's a war?

It was too short probably, because the Russians took the other part of Poland. And they took us away.

OK, we'll come to this. What I want to find out is did you-- when World War II happened, do you remember where you were the day the war started?

In 1939.

Yeah, September 1st, 1939.

1939. December or-- no, no.

September. September.

September, yeah.

Do you remember hearing about the war starting?

Yeah.

How did you learn? How did you hear about--

Radio-- from the radio.

OK, so what happened? After you hear from the radio that the war starts--

Then the other-- Germans were going from the west. The Soviets and Russia comes from east.

Did you expect the Soviets to be coming?

No. No, we didn't expect, but we were taken by Soviets.

I know.

Because Vilnius, you know, it was belong to Russia.

Well eventually, but not them.

Yeah, and then they took us to Siberia.

We'll get there.

Yeah.

What I want to find out is between the time the war starts and you're taken to Siberia, what happens? How does life change? Does your father stay being a police chief?

No. No, he was not. He went out from the police together with the policemen. He was inter--

Interrogated?

Yeah, and he moved to Warsaw.

I see. So your father--

Yeah, and he left in Vilnius, and he escaped and moved to Warsaw.

So how soon after the war starts does he leave?

After what?

The war starts in September 1939. And how soon after the war starts does your father leave for Warsaw? Was it the next day?

A couple of days before.

He left even a few days before?

Yeah, because he had to go to the policemen. Yeah.

Why would they have to go?

I don't know. How do I know?

OK, OK.

They tried to escape from Russians not to be killed or something like that. And they go to Lithuania. They were prisoners in Lithuania.

Your father?

And then father, he moved to Warsaw, because he was born in Warsaw. But we were still in Vilnius.

OK, so the policemen and your father leave Vilna-- Vilnius--

Yeah.

And they go through Lithuania.

They had to go, together with all the police officers.

So they cross the border into Lithuania.

Yeah, in Lithuania.

And you say they were taken prisoner there?

Yeah, then from Lithuania he went to Warsaw, because he was--

So they were released.

Yeah.

OK, and from there he goes to Warsaw.

Yeah.

And did he phone you to tell you he arrived?

We couldn't talk. We didn't do nothing.

You didn't know.

Yeah, because not very far away the Russians come in, took us to Siberia. Because we were very dangerous people.

Of course. Of course. Tell me, do you remember what month they took you to Siberia? Do you remember when that was?

It was maybe June, maybe sooner. Something like June.

And was it right away in 1940 or 1941?

'41. 1941. Wait, either '40 or '41. I don't remember exactly. Because we only stay about one year more in Vilnius, and then the Russians came and they took us. Because they were looking for father, but they couldn't get him, so they took us. Put it in a train and go to Siberia.

But wait a minute--

We were lucky, because German start war with the Russians, and they wanted as many soldiers as they could. So we joined the Polish army over there, but we moved from Russia to Egypt, and from Egypt to Italy.

We'll talk about all these things.

Yeah.

There are so many details to ask you about. So I still want to go back. I want to go back to right the time when your father leaves.

What?

When your father leaves with the other policemen for Warsaw.

Yeah, OK, that was 1939.

That's 1939.

Yeah.

All right, in 1939 in Vilna, what soldiers marched in? Was it Russian soldiers who marched in to Vilna, or was it other soldiers?

I think it was mostly Lithuanian, because Lithuania was feeling used to us belonging to Lithuania before.

OK.

Whatever happened that Poland got it. I don't know. I know it was a beautiful place-- very nice. Yeah.

So when your father left--

Rivers.

Yeah. When your father left, the change that happened was that Lithuanian soldiers marched in, yes?

Yeah.

And so does this come under Lithuanian control?

Yeah. Yeah.

OK, how does life go on for you, your mother, and your brother? What happens with your family at that time?

I had to go to work. My brother had to go to work.

In Vilna.

Yeah.

What did you have to do? What were you doing?

I went to the restaurant that we used to go, and I was working over there.

So you became a waiter.

Yeah, not the waiter, but the helper.

OK.

Yeah, because we knew the guy that owned it. Yeah, very nice.

And why couldn't you continue school?

Pardon?

Why could you not continue school?

No, I went to the school, too. But from the school I went to work. Yeah.

OK, did you continue living in your apartment?

Pardon?

The apartment that your father had.

Yeah, we have to leave the apartment. Different. Have to go, you know.

Oh, really? Where did you move to?

Some-- not very far from church. In Vilnius. Anyway, long time ago for that.

I know. I know I'm asking you all kinds of questions that are so unexpected. But at any rate, so your mother--

My mother, yeah, she died.

I know. We'll come to the details about that. What kind of work was your brother doing at this time? When your father is gone and you were going to school and working in the restaurant, what is your brother doing?

He was playing piano.

Oh, he was playing piano.

Yeah, he had the orchestra, you know, and they're going here there to play.

And he earned money this way?

No.

No?

No. Mother, she was mostly sick.

What was her illness?

I don't know, but she was sick mostly.

Did she stay--

She didn't feel good, you know.

OK.

And she died. But not in Vilnius. She died in Russia. They took us to Russia, and you know and that she didn't have any medication, and she died.

Tell me, war first started--

Pardon?

In 1939 when the war first starts, from what I know Vilnius comes under Lithuanian control. And that is probably in the fall of '39.

Yeah. Oh, it's was very nice.

Oh, yeah?

Oh, yeah. No problems, nothing.

OK.

I was working. I could go to school, and I was working, because father didn't work. I mean, he was not in. We didn't have any money. We had a room and furniture, everything, but there we had to pay.

Yeah.

So my brother was working and I was working.

How did your brother earn money?

Well, he was a very good piano player.

Yes.

So they have the orchestra, and he was playing on the piano.

Did he make money from that?

Yeah. Oh, yeah.

Oh, he got paid for this.

Oh, yeah.

OK. Oh, my train of thought. And in 1940--

1940.

In July 1940, Lithuania, which now Vilna is part of, becomes incorporated into the Soviet Union.

Oh, yeah?

You didn't-- I was going to ask you.

It must have something happened, because the Lithuanians didn't like Russians.

I know.

What happened? I don't know why. Then I was already in Russia probably when it happened. Yeah.

Well, I don't know. I don't know. See, I'm trying to place your deportation. There was a major deportation from Vilna in June 1941.

That's it. That what we went to.

OK.

Yeah, in June.

Yeah.

Because I remember the month. Yeah.

June.

June. It was June.

But before then, in Vilna, had the Soviets come and taken over from the Lithuanians?

There were some Soviets, too.

Yeah?

Yeah.

How did you see the presence? Did you see soldiers in the streets-- Russian soldiers?

No, I don't think that they were on the streets. They usually stay, you know, on [INAUDIBLE] places--

Other places.

--where they're supposed to be.

Like their barracks.

But there was a Lithuanian police office. Police-- Lithuanians.

And did they go into the same police station your father worked in?

Yeah. Oh, yeah. But there was then Italians, not Polish.

Yeah.

Yeah. Finally got its own town. That's it.

OK.

It did belong to Lithuania, I think.

Yes, Vilnius belonged to Lithuania.

But how it happened-- did Poland got it? I don't know. I can't tell you.

OK, that's OK.

Vilnius-- beautiful place. Beautiful.

I know.

River-- remember river over there. Yeah.

Tell me-- do you remember the place that you moved to with your mother and your brother?

Yeah.

OK, after your father leaves and you had to leave the nice apartment.

Yeah, now we have to leave this place and go to the-- it was-- so it was far away from the place where we moved.

Yeah?

Yeah.

And was it smaller?

There was our friends' property or something like that, so they let that stay over there until the Russians came in and took us away.

Do you remember the day that the Russians came?

It was in June. Yeah, in June.

Was it nighttime or daytime?

Nighttime.

Nighttime?

Yeah, nighttime. About 12:00 or something like that, even more. Put us on the truck and took to the station.

Well, tell me-- did they knock on the door? How did--

Yeah, knock at the door with the rifle.

Yeah.

OK, backing up. One of the Russians-- he was standing by the door. And they said don't take this. And this guy told me-- take this. Warm things. Warm things.

So one of them was telling you to take things?

Yeah.

And the others were saying no, leave it.

Yeah, no they didn't-- slow to take the warm things.

And did you?

Yeah, we had to, because we were going to Russia, you know.

How much time did they give you to pack?

I don't remember how long it was. Not too long.

When you got on the truck, was it daytime already?

Night.

It still was nighttime when you were on the truck?

Yeah, night. Night.

And you say your mother was not feeling.

No.

So how did she manage to get from her-- you know, if she's ill--

Whatever we could do, we take it. That's all what we could do.

OK.

They hurry up. Go, go. Sit down. Sit down.

And when you were on the truck, did you see anybody else you knew?

Not on the truck, but when we get in the wagon, then we saw the guys that-- I mean, the man and wife and his daughter. Yeah.

And you knew those people.

Yeah. We knew them. And we stayed together over there.

Did anybody tell you why you were being taken?

Because we were Polish. That's all.

Had you been expecting this, or was it a total surprise?

Not very much, but it happened. Yeah. We knew that they taking. But maybe we would say yeah, we move from this place. We go to this place. But still they still knew about that and took us. Because my mother was my father's wife.

Yeah.

They couldn't get him, so they took us-- me, my brother, and mother.

And your father, as far as you know, is in Warsaw.

Yeah, he was in Warsaw. He escaped from the concentration camp that he was holding, and went to Warsaw.

And do you know how he spent the war years? What happened to him in Warsaw?

To tell you, since they took us to Russia, I don't know nothing.

About your father.

Yeah.

Probably he's dead already.

Did your father survive the war?

Pardon?

Did your father survive?

I don't think so. I don't think so.

Can we cut the camera a little bit?

Yeah, yeah.

Wait a minute. Now here's the thing. OK.

[INAUDIBLE]

--sitting down. It's OK. It's just I have this temptation.

Tell me. I think it got clarified. We spoke with your wife and your daughter. Your father did survive World War II.

Probably. Yeah.

OK, did you meet him after the war? Did you ever see your father again?

Yes, one time. I think I remember him.

OK.

I don't remember what, where it was. But he was he was living I think in Warsaw.

OK. So anyway, he's out of the picture.

He knew that Mama is dead. So I don't know if he get married or what. No, I don't know. I don't think so. I saw him, Mila, didn't I?

Yeah, you saw him a couple years after.

Yeah.

OK, after the war.

Yes.

After the war.

OK, so your father survives the war. You see him again a few years afterwards, but you don't know what his experiences were.

But I was in the army, and we moved to England, because we were with the English outfit. So that's it.

So tell me this. Let's go back to when the Soviets take you. And then you're taken by truck to a train.

Yeah.

And in the train you recognize a family that you knew.

Yeah.

OK. Was there any announcement as to why you were being taken?

No.

Nobody said I'm arresting you because you did this, or I'm arresting you because you are the relative of this person? It's just pack your bags and go.

Yeah.

OK.

So where did you go? Where did they take you? Where did they take you?

Altaysky Krai Novosibirskaya Oblast.

Oh, yeah. That's far away.

That's it.

Altaysky Krai Novosibirskaya Oblast.

Yeah.

How long did it take to get there?

About two, three weeks.

And what was it like on that journey in the train? Once in a while we got buckets of soup. Once in a while, buckets of soup.

How many people were in the train?

I can't tell you, but quite a few.

Yeah? And the family that you knew, do you know why they were taken?

Who knows why they took us. And they took them. For nothing. Because we are Polish or something like this. But the Russian people were nice. Very nice. Very nice. Except the--

The government. The people ruled.

Yeah.

Describe for me the space that you were in on that train. Were you in a passenger car?

No. Passenger. Oh, my gosh.

What did it look like?

Luxury. We had luxury. Everybody got a special chair to sit down or lay down if you want to.

OK, if it wasn't that-- can we cut? Do you want to take a break?

No.

There are quite a few questions. There are quite a few questions.

OK, make all the questions and let me go home.

I know. But answer me this.

You're not from FBI, no?

No. No, no, no, no. But I understand it wasn't a passenger car. What I'm asking-- what I want you to do is describe what it was like. What was the car like?

Lots of people were laying on the floor. That's it.

There was no place to sleep?

No.

Were there many people to each wagon?

Probably. I don't remember, but a lot of people-- as much as you could have in.

And your mother-- if she was ill, this kind of situation isn't helpful.

Well, she had some medication, but that's all.

OK.

Yeah, until she get medication, then she couldn't live any more.

On the train, was there anybody who died during those three weeks?

No. No.

OK.

I don't remember that. No. Well, then we know each other.

What did people talk about on that train?

What's going to happen? Where are we going? We're going east, east, east. We would rather go to China, but we couldn't go.

You couldn't go that far east. And what did I want to say? Were there people crying?

Maybe kids. There were some kids crying.

Yeah. And here's a more personal question. Forgive me for asking this, but it comes up. How did people relieve themselves? Where did you go to the toilet if you're all on this one car?

Yeah. Once in a while you had to go to the door, and that's it.

So you opened the door?

No. But over there.

So it became unsanitary.

But when they stopped, they cleaned up a little, but then that's it. And then we go.

I see.

Soldiers were standing up so nobody escape.

And how did the soldiers behave?

You know what? When they come to us, soldiers-- one soldier was standing by the door. And there they let, you know

where we're going to take some stuff. Stuff. Stuff. And this guy put the hot warm stuff on. Good warm stuff on. Because he knew we go to Siberia.

Oh, that's where they're taking you.

And he said in Russian [SPEAKING RUSSIAN]

And what does that mean?

He was saying it.

Yeah.

And they was taking-- no, no you don't have to take nothing. And you will see [SPEAKING RUSSIAN]

Can you understand Russian? Could you speak Russian at the time?

I understand a little. Not too much, but Russian and Polish are very close, you know.

And how old were you? At this point--

Meaning my age?

Yeah, how old were you when you were taken?

How old I could be. 14, 15?

OK.

Not anymore than that.

Were you afraid? Pardon?

Were you afraid?

No. I was afraid about my mother, because she was sick. And so me and my brother, we were OK.

And where did they take you to?

Pardon?

Where did they take you to?

When you went to Novosibirsk Altaysky Krai, when the train stopped, what did you see? Where were you?

Big, big country.

Only the countryside?

Only the country. Maybe a station. That's what was it. And the rest was nothing.

And what did you do?

We go in further.

On foot?

No.

By train.

By train.

OK.

All the way to Siberia.

And when the train finally stopped-- when it finally stopped--

They put us on the train. On the-- know no train, but the car.

In a truck?

Truck, yeah. And back to the place that we were supposed to stay.

And what does was that place? What was the place you were supposed to stay?

Kolkhoz.

A kolkhoz.

Kolkhoz. They making everything for the bread.

They were growing wheat?

What?

Was it growing wheat at the kolkhoz?

They grow something, but I don't know. Grow something. I don't know. I don't remember.

OK. Can we cut for a second? I think you're dad's getting tired.

Russians hit Germans, so they needed the soldiers. And our General Anders, he rose and he organized Polish army in Russia. They let us know together, come to the one place. They give us the food, they give us the dress and everything, and we go to the front.

OK, we'll come to that. But right now we'll have a short break.

Pardon?

We're going to have a little bit of a break, and then I'll ask you in a little while more questions.

Yeah.

[SPEAKING POLISH]

What did you say?

Let him have [INAUDIBLE].

It's fine. It's fine. He's fine. He's fine. OK. All right, before the break, we were talking about Siberia.

Yeah.

You were taken to a kolkhoz, you said. Tell people who don't know what a kolkhoz is what it was. What kind of a place is the kolkhoz?

[SPEAKING POLISH]

Kolkhoz?

Yeah, what is it?

It's a place where all the people are working for me for one place.

OK, is it a factory?

No.

Is it a farm?

[INAUDIBLE]. Yeah, only the farm.

It's a farm, OK. And from what I understand, a kolkhoz is a farm that is a collective farm.

About a collective farm, I don't know.

OK. What kind of--

For me it was something new that I come in, you know? I was only a boy at that time.

Tell me-- what happened with you? What did you do at the kolkhoz? What was your job?

Nothing.

You didn't have to work?

No.

Did your brother?

I was too young. My brother, my mother-- yes.

I was kid.

So you didn't have to work yet.

Yeah. I don't remember what I was doing.

What kind of work did your brother do?

Huh?

What kind of work did your brother do on the kolkhoz?

I don't know.

Was there food to eat?

I don't remember. I don't know what they were doing in that farm. I don't know.

OK. Where did you get--

I can't give you the answer if I don't know.

Of course.

I don't know. I don't know what they did. Been long time ago. I was kid.

OK. OK.

I don't know.

You need to turn it off? OK. Turn it off. We're off now, I take it.

No.

We're running?

Do you want me to stop?

Of course. OK, what was it that you wanted to tell me?

Yeah. OK, when they released us from this, because we could-- there was a war with them. And we had the Polish-- probably something that they didn't tolerate. So we went to the town, and there was a town in which there was a garden. And in the garden was a scene like for the players and piano. And nobody can play piano, except my brother, because my brother was perfect.

In piano.

So he was a piano player.

In Siberia?

Yeah, in Siberia.

Isn't that interesting?

Yeah.

Did he get more money? Did he get something special from that?

I don't know. I know I got more bread to eat.

Well, that's the more important thing.

Yeah. Oh, yeah.

Was there bread? Were you hungry there?

Always.

Yeah?

Always hungry. I could eat, eat, eat.

Well, tell me. What kind of food did you have?

Pardon?

What kind of food was there in Siberia?

To tell you the truth, I don't even remember. I was too young to remember.

Did you have potatoes?

My mother did something-- coked something. Called what, I don't know. I don't remember. I don't know. Until we joined the Polish army.

So when you joined the Polish army, how did that happen? You were imprisoned or you were in--

Well, yeah. We find out they did tell us Polish army organizing in Russia. And they let us go to join the army.

Did your mother go, too?

Oh, yeah-- no. My brother and me. My mother left home.

You mean she stayed behind?

Yeah.

Was she still alive?

No, she died a long time ago.

OK, did she die before you left for the army?

No, after. Yeah. After we find out that she's dead. They let us know, and we buried her. And that's all. But she was laying in a hospital, but she was dying. And we took her out, which [SPEAKING POLISH] you know that we put her in the grave.

And where is she buried? There was a cemetery-- Russian cemetery. Where they had a place you couldn't put-- only in this.

Did you have a possibility to put a stone up for your mother? Is there a marker?

No. They dig the hole-- deep hole. So they let the body in, put few step--

Some dirt?

Yeah, so they cover her up, and that's it.

No [SPEAKING POLISH] I mean, no. [SPEAKING POLISH]

[INAUDIBLE]

Were there prayers? Was there a mass for her?

No, there was no.

OK, can we cut for a second? If you could say the same thing now on tape--

[INAUDIBLE]

If you believe in something, they kill you. You say there is a God, no siree. There is no God. There is Stalin. That's all.

[SPEAKING POLISH]

Yeah.

[SPEAKING POLISH]

Yeah. So no priest, no marker, nothing. OK, and then you went to join the army?

Yeah.

Tell me about that. How did you find all of the other people? Where did they come from? And who is General Anders?

Yeah.

OK.

We read it in the paper that they organize in Poland Polish army.

OK.

In Russia.

And where in Russia did you join them? What place?

I can't remember that.

OK.

I can't tell you exactly the name of it, but it was the Polish army. Yeah.

Was it far from where you were in Altaysky Krai?

They let all the Polish prisoners, you know? You know, because Russians-- they have a Polish prison there. They let them out. They organized in one place. The action as I remember that place, but I forgot now. Years ago. I was kid almost.

Now, did you tell me--

I had two years to join the army. Yeah, I was 16, but you know. They wouldn't take I was 18. I said I'm 18.

And they took you?

They asked me the question. I don't have anything. The Russians took it away from me.

You mean all your identification papers.

No.

Nothing.

Yeah.

OK, was your brother with you?

Pardon?

Did you go together with your brother?

Yeah, with my brother. Older brother.

Did you stay with your brother the entire time?

Yeah, for a few months, yes. Together. Until we moved from Russia to Iraq.

Tell me. How did you leave Russia to Iraq? How did that happen?

What?

How did you leave Russia for Iraq or Iran?

With the trains.

With the trains?

Yeah.

OK.

Yeah, with the trains.

Did you go by boat at all or just train?

Pardon?

Did you go by boat at all?

No. No. By train.

OK.

Yeah, it was --what's the name? I forgot. But we joined the army. Then the army organized by General Anders. And we

moved to Egypt. No-- Iraq. From Iraq to Egypt, and from Egypt to Italy-- fighting.

So did you have any basic training in Egypt?

Yeah.

You did?

Yeah. Oh, yeah.

How long? What was that all about?

Like a radio station. Not a radio station, but the-- that you talk by the telephones-- by the radio.

OK.

Yeah.

OK, so it was like a radio operator.

Yeah, radio operator.

Was that your job-- to be a radio operator?

Until sometimes, and then I joined the different place to fight. I was in the-- anyway, we went to the army. We joined the army, and we stay here in Kirkuk. From Kirkuk we went to the front. And that's it.

Well, where was the front? Where was the front?

The front was someplace. I don't remember where.

Was it in Italy?

No.

No?

No. Somewhere I don't know.

Did you fight--

In the first place we had to go to exercise. So they give us time to organize and General Anders. Maybe you heard about that name. General Anders-- he organized.

Who is General Anders?

General Anders was the one guy that organized all those armies in Poland-- in Russia.

OK.

Yeah. He was released from the jail. Yeah.

Who's jail? Who put him in jail?

Russians. He was a Polish general, so they grab him. You know, whatever it is. You never head about General Anders?

I wanted you to tell me who he was.

No, but I was under him. But I was in a different-- there was fifth division, sixth division. Yeah, I was in [SPEAKING POLISH]

You were in the sixth division?

Pardon?

Were you in the sixth division you said?

No. [SPEAKING POLISH]

Either the 5th or 5. I don't remember. But my brother was killed.

Tell me about that. How did this happen?

I don't know. He was in a different company. I was in a different company, and then I find out that he was killed.

What battle was this?

In Monte Cassino.

In Monte Cassino?

Yeah.

Did you fight in the Battle of Monte Cassino?

I was lucky. I didn't. But he did. Because I was moved out. I got sick or something. I had to be removed to go to hospital.

I see.

And then I find out that my brother was killed.

I see.

Yeah.

So then you were all alone.

Pardon?

Then you were all alone.

Well, there was the Polish guys, too in the hospital. Yeah. Then I was only alone. My mother had died, my brother was killed, and I left alone. But I was in the army then. And from the army we moved to Iraq. From Iraq we went to Egypt. From Egypt we went to the front.

And the front was at Monti--

In. Italy

In Italy.

Yeah.

OK.

Oh, we had to go up to Monte Cassino.

Oh, so you had to climb Monte Cassino?

Pardon?

Did you have to go up a hill?

Yeah. No, slowly, slowly. Germans were very strong, you know.

So when there was the battle, you were in the hospital.

Yeah, I was wounded one thing.

You were wounded?

Yeah, in the leg.

So you had been taking part-- you had been shot?

Yeah, and then I find out when I come back-- I find out that my brother was killed.

Yeah.

Did you-- were you able to bury him?

No.

No?

No.

Did you see him again?

No.

Did it-- so you didn't--

No, I know where he's laying, yeah. That's all. But I couldn't lay him out, because I was out in the hospital, and he was killed.

Oh, I see.

Yeah.

So who buried him?

Some other guys.

OK.

Yeah.

OK.

They're not going to leave anybody laying. They take it up. You know, they're a special company to move the--

The bodies.

Yeah, wounded or killed. Yeah.

OK, and after that, how long did you stay in this hospital?

I did not come back.

Did you fight again?

Yeah, no.

You never fought again?

War over. Quiet already.

When the war was over, were you still in Italy?

Yeah.

Yeah?

Yeah.

OK.

In Italy, and then they took us to England. We go to England. We stay in England. That's it. That's what was working over there-- everywhere.

So when the war was over, you were able to go to England and work in England.

I wouldn't be able to work-- to go to England. They take us to England.

They took you.

All the battalions, and then our Polish army. And then OK, over there everybody got to go to get the work, wherever he may be able to, and start your family. That's it.

And so you didn't go back to Poland?

No, no I couldn't go to Poland because no use. Poland was occupied by the Russians-- the Russians, yeah.

Did you know-- did you try to get in touch with your father?

No, I didn't know where he is.

Did he try to find you?

One time I saw him. Only one time. That's it. And then he goes away and I stay home. That it.

Where did you see him? When you were in England?

I don't remember if in England, in Italy. I think in England. Ah, anyway he's no more alive. And mother dead, and brother dead. Whole family, except me so far.

But you have another family now-- the family you started.

Yeah. [INAUDIBLE]. I was lucky.

What was the hardest part in all of this?

Pardon?

What was the hardest part for you in all of this that happened?

Hardest things it was in Russia, because you couldn't have enough bread to eat. Always hungry.

OK, what did people eat in Russia?

I don't know. I don't know what they eat, how they eat food. I was it on the-- when I joined the army, they give you food. You know, they had to give you food from the one time. Yeah.

Did many people from the kolkhoz go to the army-- to the Polish army?

No, we only were two-- two of us.

Really?

Yeah, [INAUDIBLE] Russians.

I see. I see. I see.

And they fight Germans, too.

Did you ever go back to Poland?

Yes, I went one time.

How many years later?

How many years? Maybe 10, 15. Yeah. Did your children ask you about what happened during the war? Did your children ask you about what you had gone through?

I told them.

You told them.

They never ask me. I told them. Here. There is my orders.

OK, those are some medals and some photos. And we're going to film those.

The one on the top is the highest.

We'll take those down.

[SPEAKING POLISH]

OK, well, is there anything else you'd like to say today?

Pardon?

Or is there anything else you'd like to add to your interview today?

No.

No?

I think you asked too many questions.

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Yeah. Well, what I just--

No, you asked the questions, I had to answer it. That's it. But I said, OK. I answered all the questions.

Thank you. Thank you for doing that.

Thank you very much for--

What I will do now, though, is I will-- if you could remain seated for a minute, I will conclude the interview. This concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mr. Lucian Pawlowski on May 24, 2019. And now we will film some of your medals and your photographs. OK, thank you.

This is 15 seconds of room tone.

Huh?

He's talking to the camera. You know Yeah whenever you're ready

Mr. Pawlowski, who is this in this photograph right here?

Where?

Right here. Can you see where my--

That's me.

That's you.

Yeah.

How old were you here?

Pardon?

How old were you here?

I don't know.

You don't know? Were you in the army?

Different picture. That's it.

OK.

[INAUDIBLE]

Was he-- you can say.

Yeah.

He was in the army.

He was in the army at that time.

Yes.

OK, this is what your wife is telling me. All right, so you were in the army at that time?

Right there in those three, one of them are me.

Oh, one of these three is you as well?

Yeah, on the right. Yeah.

OK, we'll see this picture. And that was you in the army with two friends?

Yeah, [INAUDIBLE].

OK.

Yeah, from my company.

And what is this in the middle?

Pardon?

What is this metal that I see in the middle? First one is a [SPEAKING POLISH] That means that I was a good soldier like.

OK.

Yeah, and the other on the south is the name of this.

The Polish Eagle?

Yeah, Polish Eagle.

So that's the one that's just below it.

Yeah, and these are the English-- all English. And they give it to you. I don't know what kind of to tell you exactly. You have to ask the English.

OK, but these are all the medals you got as part of being in the British forces?

Yeah. All English.

There we go. Let's take a look at all of these. This looks good. Do you remember the name of what division you were in and what--

Yeah.

What was it? 56-- [POLISH]. Sixth division.

[SPEAKING POLISH]

You can say it in Polish.

[SPEAKING POLISH]

Go ahead.

[SPEAKING POLISH]

Somebody will then know what that is. And now if we can stop the camera for a minute after we finish panning.

[SPEAKING POLISH]

So Mr. Pawlowski.

Yeah?

You see this little medal on your jacket?

Which one?

The one on top-- the small one-- the small one that looks like it's English. Can you tell me about that?

Which one?

She cannot-- OK. Tell now.

Oh, this one.

Yeah, what's that?

It says on the top.

Is it from the Polish or the British army?

No, that's in English. Everything in English. We belong to England.

OK.

Yeah, all the--

I think it says here as a veteran of the armed forces.

[INAUDIBLE]

Yeah, I think that's something of what it says.

It was the latest one from England.

OK, so this is new? When you say the latest one?

Yeah, maybe 10, 15 years ago.

No, no.

--just got that from England.

OK. OK.

Yeah.

All right.

A long time ago.

Wait a minute.

I got it from England when I was in England--

OK.

--right after the war.

Can you cut just--

We're rolling.

OK, what this pin says-- this small pin-- is His Majesty's Armed Forces Veteran.

Yeah, that's it.

All right, thank you very much.

Everything.

OK, thank you very much, Mr. Pawlowski.

No problems.

Thanks. Bye.

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