

Summary of Oral History: Phil Trietman

RG#: RG-50.031.0180

This Summary was written by a USHMM Volunteer on [05/2022]

Phil Trietman: Recording of Phil addressing a class of students; when WW2 broke out, Phil was in town where his father was born. Phil & other young people rounded up, held in internment camp for 7 mos., branded with "KL" Konzentrationslager, meaning "concentration camp"; Mielec forced labor at Mielec airline factory 1 yr; transported 4 days, 3 nights to Dachau, approximately 160 people in one box car, corner bucket water washroom, traded out 1x day; 4 mo. slave labor carrying stones back & forth to same locations; transport to Flossenburg, enslaved 3 yrs. along with Russian prisoners, 80% Jewish; forced labor cutting bulks of clothing coming in, searching for jewels hidden in seams; daily routine - sleeping on straw, awakened by bell, looking around for the dead, if they had better shoes or clothing, acquire them, noon soup from a bucket, lucky if potato bit found, dinner coffee & 12" bread loaf split among 3 men, eaten right away otherwise stolen from fellow prisoners, 1x wk 3 min shower, if sick, sent to death, linen shoes with wood sole, Phil loses all teeth, 4 yrs. in same striped uniform; being German-speaking assisted survival; liberated April 1945; post-war 1953-1973 played & worked in sport of soccer (1963-1973 a chairman of referees); Phil returns to discussing war, 4 days, 4 nights death march from concentration camp, many killed if they fell down; liberation, seeing Russian tanks then American tanks; at a farm, fellow prisoner dies, malnourished body unable to receive so much food; Phil's 3 mo hospital recovery; Phil recaps all the slave labor jobs he endured including two in lumberyards; reunited with brother/sister Chicago, finding jobs, first marriage 1 month, becoming an American citizen; 2nd marriage 47 yrs. at time of recording; Phil returns to sharing degrading conditions in camps, the various imprisoned, gays, upper-class, their demoralizing classifications; mother had died pre-war from cancer; father, a tailor, Phil had heard he had been killed because SS didn't like the way he altered pants; Phil's surgeries, partial lung removal, heart resulting in 88" of scars; children, grandchildren; discussion on movie Schindler's List, Holocaust deniers.