

I'm Sylvia Abrams. Today we are interviewing Mark Moss, a Holocaust survivor. The project is sponsored by the National Council of Jewish Women, Cleveland section. Mr. Moss, we were just talking about how you were conscripted to go to the army after being in Siberia. And you wanted to go back. We were going to talk a little bit more about what happened as you were sent to Siberia.

When I was sent to Siberia, I had the only thing which was typical Polish, a good coat, where the Russians didn't have nice coats. So when I came to Siberia with all these Russian hooligans, what they call it, they found out that I'm Polish. And all of a sudden they found out also that in the neighborhood of that camp was a camp of women, Polish women mostly.

So I start asking them where are they and so forth. Finally, one showed to me that it goes up this side, where that policeman on top that guard stands. So I start going there. And they warned me right away. So I said, I'm going to go and see whether my sister's there. Because there were plenty Jewish and Polish women from Poland.

Finally, I risked my life and I started asking questions to another girl there. She said, yes, Karola Mosowich is here. Finally, she came out. And they were almost starting shooting and so forth. But finally when they found out that I found a sister, the next day I was gone.

That's when you were transported farther East.

Yeah.

So what was the name of the camp where this happened where the women's camp was across the way? Yes, there is Stantsiya Yaya, Yaya is the name of the camp. Irkutskaya Oblast, the region is Irkutsk. It could have been probably 1,000 or 2000 in Irkutsk. Irkutsk is a big city. But the region is Irkutsk.

So after the Russian authorities found out you had found your sister, they shipped you farther East.

Yeah. But when they freed us, when I said before that they freed us and we are brothers and sisters, and we are Slovaks, so they freed my sister too because she was from Poland actually. But the one thing I knew that she is in that camp. And she knew that I was in that camp too. So after when I came to the Polish army, I start looking. And finally I found the address that she was sent out from that camp Siberia to the border of China, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan. You know these areas?

Yes. That's all the area near the border with China. Yes.

Yeah. So we had the contact already. And I was sending all her letters and she was sending back. And then I was sent to the army, as I said in your telephone [NON-ENGLISH].

Why don't we start there? Let's pick up now the train of things. We know you kept contact with your sister.

Yeah.

And we're able to keep track of her because of this. Let's go back to where on the other tape you said this man came and he suggested that you're all brothers and you figured this is better than staying in Siberia. And the train comes and stops for you. Do you remember when it was? And then pick up and tell us what happened to you.

It was probably in 1942. It was in the winter or the spring?

Yeah, after the Germans attacked.

So it was in the spring or the winter?

No, it was in fall I believe.

In the fall of 1942?

Yeah. I believe so.

OK. Tell us where you were taken then.

So as I said before, that they hold up a train especially. The train wouldn't stop there. For some reason they stopped. They gave me a horse and some commandeered Russian, with the sani. Sani is what they call it? You know, that ice?

Oh, a Russian that had a sled.

Sled, yeah. Sled. And with the sled, I have to go around three, four hours until the station of the train where. It a little nothing farm or something. I don't know exactly where it was. The train stopped. And I went there. And with the train, I got watched by Russians so that nobody should harm me or hurt me. And we went I would say about four or five days, day and night, from that place to Sumy.

Now you were the only Polish person who was taken out of this camp?

No.

Were there other people traveling with you?

Others, but I didn't know them. They separate them. So you didn't see that they were traveling. You thought you were traveling alone?

Yeah. In fact, I was traveling alone.

And you were being guarded by Russians on the train?

Yeah. They guarded me. They told me they guarded me because some hooligans, again, would attack me and you're a Polack, and you're a brother and all that junk. And about 3 and 1/2 days, I believe, day and night, and traveled to that. That was a normal train, even food and everything. The food which they have is not much, but they still have some food better than the camp.

And I came to Sumy. In Sumy,

Now, Sumy is located in the Ukraine, right?

Ukraine.

OK, so you're then in Southwest Russia.

Yeah, I believe so.

OK. And tell us what happened in Sumy to you.

Sumy, I was in the army, exercising and all kinds of things. And then finally they found out I had to register who am I and what school I have, and they needed officers.

And all this time you're using the name Marian Nowakowsky.

Nowakowsky.

Nowakowsky as your name. And you're telling his background as your schooling and everything? You're using all his stuff?

Yeah.

OK, tell us about--

First of all, they couldn't check because everything was ruined. And then if they check, there was another Marian Nowakowsky. You know what I'm saying? So I was covered.

So, now tell us about this organization. How did they train you to be a soldier?

Oh, normally it's like in the Polish army. First of all, you have the exercising back and forth, running, rising 5 o'clock in the morning, naked, washing yourself half naked, cold or not cold. It was the real thing, real McCoy. And I was young. I could stand all this. Although I was suffering a little bit from the camp. Still I was young.

Were most of the people who were in this unit people who'd been in camps in Siberia?

Yeah. Some, yes, mostly was. But then later when we came closer to Poland, we had Polish people coming into the camps.

Now tell me a little bit about the organization of this Polish army and the relationship of it to the Russian army.

You're talking about two organizations. One was Armia Krajowa, which was Anders' Armia, General Anders, which was in England. And the other one was Wanda Wasilewska. I was supposed to be, according to the agreement with England and America, the Russians, that we're supposed to be in the Armia Anders' in England. But they never kept their word, so I was not surprised.

All of a sudden, we heard that Wanda Wasilewska army. So instead of going to Anders' they sent me to Sumy and Wanda Wasilewska's army. And then we start going on the front, on the battle line. I was fighting, not far, not Sumy. I started on the real border of Poland and Soviet Union, which was around I would say it's right after Lwów there's a Russian border line. That place we stopped.

So at the pre-war Russian-Polish border. There is where you started fighting.

I started fighting.

What were you trained as? What kind of a soldier had they trained you to be?

This what they call it?

A foot soldier?

A foot soldier.

And to shoot a gun?

Shoot a gun, grenades, shoot a gun, grenades. [NON-ENGLISH], do you know [NON-ENGLISH]?

No, I don't know what that is.

Anyway, they found out that I have a little more, and they needed officers. They send me for half a year to cadet in school.

So how long? You were a foot soldier fighting on the Russian border. How long before they sent you to officer school?

I would say six months.

Six months? What were the conditions in those six months?

Good. Oh, in the army it's as good as could be. I mean you have to rise at 5 o'clock, not sleep too much, and you go and you-- I don't know the terms, anyway, [NON-ENGLISH].

There was morning calisthenics and all this kind of thing?

Yeah, on the floor and with dirt, with everything. You come in. You have to wash in five minutes. All kinds of things, discipline. And then when you're ready, then they send you to the front.

And before you went to officer school then in the six months you were in several battles?

Yeah.

Do you remember the names of any of the places where the battles were?

That's what just said. It was in Russia.

In Russia, along the border there?

Yeah.

While you were this was happening to you, were you aware at all what was happening to the Jews near these places?

No.

You didn't know?

I didn't know. The only thing which I found out is when I came, as I said on the telephone, we came to Warsaw. We could have gone into Warsaw, no question whatsoever. But we stayed in Saska Kępa, so that the AK, the Armia Krajowa was fighting the Germans. And when the Germans killed all the AKs, then the Russians said, let's go now.

But during the time when you were a foot soldier, you had no idea what was happening to other Jews?

No. We didn't know anything. We know a lot of propaganda all the time through the radio. Stalin said so, and Stalin said so.

Tell me about being sent to officer's school then. What was that like?

Oh, the same thing. It was very harsh exercise. Then a lot of, you see, it was a Polish army but was under the Russians. The Polish didn't do-- didn't have too much to say there. So when you go to a cadet school under Polish but it's Russian actually, you have to be brainwashed. You have a lot of lectures. You have to give them the grades.

So I have to I have to kid myself and gave them grades.

So you must have been a very good actor because nobody figured out who you were during all this.

See, you don't have to be. If you're in a situation in my age, and you want to live, you do everything.

Now, this eight months, you were trained then to be a lieutenant?

Yeah.

I have to-- you're not getting automatically a lieutenant. Here again, you have to go through three, four officers sitting there at the table. And they ask you questions. What do you do in a case like this, in a case like this, and then written things, like in a college. And I got good grades.

And this was all in the Russian language, not in Polish?

Polish.

Oh, this was in Polish.

See, we were in Russia. But the whole thing was that supposed to be the Polish army with Polish language, although the officers weren't Polacks. And they didn't know Polish, but some of them were Polacks. But to show for the world, England especially and America, that we have a Polish army, nothing wrong with that.

After you got commissioned to lieutenant, where did they then send you?

Again, to the front. I had a platoon.

You had a platoon that you were in charge of? You mentioned, this is then we're in 1943 now at this point. Tell me some of the names of the places that you went through while you were fighting.

Oder, River Oder.

The River Oder.

Mostly, and then the Nisa, Nisa River.

And what kind of battles were you involved in?

Oh we, at that time, we beat them all the time. It was easy. But still I got injured.

Tell me about the circumstances of the injury.

Well just to have, it wasn't-- it's not from a rifle. I would say it was from an artillery, shrapnels here.

So the shrapnel hit along the neck.

Were you hospitalized?

Oh, yeah. After that I was sent to that command in Warsaw. At that time, we had already Warsaw.

OK. I'm going to backtrack a little bit to get the chronology. You said that you were in all these different battles along the Oder river during 1943. And then where were you hospitalized with the shrapnel? Do you remember where?

You asked me where. I don't remember even where--

Was it a military hospital?

Probably, it was in Lutsk. I would say Lutsk was the place where I was. Yeah sounds like Lutsk.

Do you remember how long you were hospitalized?

Well I would say, two or three weeks.

And then from there you were transferred to Warsaw? What kind of a position did you then have in Warsaw?

Lieutenant.

You were a lieutenant, but what were you attached to?

What kind of a unit?

To the command.

You were attached to the Central Command in Warsaw?

Yeah, yeah. [NON-ENGLISH] I said.

Had the Polish already crossed the border, crossed into Warsaw?

Yeah.

Or was this was--

Oh, that's exactly what I said. When I was hospitalized, after the hospital, the Polish army and the Russian army were in Poland, in Warsaw. And at that time, on one street with all Warsaw was ruined. I'll show you some pictures if you want to know. I have a book.

Do you have them here?

No, I have a-- we'll go in there. So there was one beautiful street in [NON-ENGLISH]. So they opened up that command in Warsaw. And when I was ready, it was four weeks I believe when I was in the hospital, not two weeks, probably four weeks. I was sent-- I asked for being relieved, because my sister was already in Łódź.

And this is the sister that you had kept in contact with?

Yeah. She was in Łódź already, because Łódź was free. And they send the Polish prisoners back to Poland.

And this was the sister who had the Aryan papers, so she also was hiding under those papers?

No. This is the other sister. She was all the time in there, in Warsaw.

This was-- OK.

This is the one that's in Canada.

OK.

So I asked to be free too. I was injured. And so they said no. You still can be a soldier. You can work in an office. You are an officer. So finally, they sent me to the command in Warsaw, main command in Warsaw.

So this was in 1944?

1944, I believe it was.

Tell me what you were in charge of in the main command.

I was in charge of victims of the war, which the parents would never find out if they would, without us, I mean if the son wasn't in the fight and they wouldn't find out whether he is alive, or dead, or injured. They would send to us and find out and ask us to find my son, to find my daughter. So I was in charge of that.

In Polish it was [NON-ENGLISH].

So you had to locate where the casualty was and notify the parents.

So I have the authorization to pull up any unit, mostly colonels, from a pólk, which is a-- pólk is in English? No it's not a pólk. Brigade.

A brigade.

Yeah. So I called up any brigade Brigadier, and I told him also that the parents always gave me where their son or daughter was and what place he was fighting. So I asked them, and they would answer me. And then I would be in touch with the parents.

Were you aware that Germany was going to lose the war for sure by that point?

Oh, yes. When we came back to Poland, we saw echelons with Germans the same way as where I was to Siberia going, thousands and thousands of them, thousands. Day and night going to Siberia, to Russia.

What kind of conditions were in Warsaw while you were working in this office in terms of food?

There was nothing in Warsaw.

Warsaw was all bombed.

Yeah, nothing.

It would have been all bombed out.

Yeah, nothing. The only place, Warsaw has two parts, Warsaw and Praga. I don't know whether you know about it, Warszawa Praga on the other side of the Vistula. There's a big bridge that was Warsaw and that was Praga. Most Jewish people would say, I would say, were in Praga. They had business there and all that. Warsaw was bombed completely. Praga was untouched for some reason. I don't know why.

So when I had the time, I always used to go to Praga with a truck, with any place, and find out and looked hiding, and looked quietly, with the gmina. You know the gmina?

That was the community.

The community, yes. Community center, Jewish Community Center. There I found out a whole bunch of things. My friends, and others who are alive, and who are not alive. The fact is my sister, I'd have contact with my sister. She is looking for me and I was looking for her. Finally, we found out there.

Is that when you found out what had happened to the Jewish people?

Yeah. Or found out before too because when I came to Warsaw, I saw there's nothing there.

Did you hear anything about the death camps while you were in the army?

Yes, this we know. Because before Warsaw, we kept Lublin, Lublin was Majdanek. And we caught all the big shots from Majdanek. And everybody, all the soldiers and the officers, were attending the court sessions. And finally we took him out, right after they took him out, we hanged him in Majdanek. You were part of the unit that did this?

Yeah.

So you attended the trials, the war trials?

Trial, and the Majdanek hanging.

You were there at the hanging? So did you walk through Majdanek, the camp itself? Did you see it?

Yeah, sure.

What conditions did you find there when you were there?

Burned bodies, have food, smoke, benches, piles of hair, piles of shoes, and they're also ordered. Big order, they are very orderly. Hair, a whole bunch of hair. I write articles. You read it maybe. And all these places which I write is from Praga which I found out-- Praga, Lublin, Warsaw.

So you yourself were personally there at Majdanek?

Oh, yeah.

And saw the war trials.

Yeah.

And saw what was there. I wasn't in the committee there, not the judges.

No, but you were a soldier.

OK. I'm trying to keep this organized and there's so much that I didn't expect even with what we discussed.

OK. Stand by.

As part of the maneuvers that your particular unit was on and in the battles, you said that you were in Lublin and were present at Majdanek when the Russian army put the German people, officers--

Hanged them.

Hung them. Tell us some more about the details of being a member of the audience at those trials.

The audience?

You were in the audience at the trials. You said you were at the trials. You went to the trials.

Yeah, in the audience. I was an officer. My brigade, not just me was. In my brigade were very few Jewish people. You ask me whether, what kind of impression. I don't know. Very, very neutral. Because they were not Jewish.

So the Russians just wanted to hang them to make an example of them?

Yes.

This was before--

It wasn't just the Russians. The Polacks, there was quite a number of Polish people which they all met some of the families who were in Majdanek. Although they weren't gassed and burnt. But they were still in Majdanek. So they didn't like the Germans anyway.

Do you remember how long you were stationed in the Lublin Majdanek area?

A very short time. You see, all the time we went, as I said before, I don't remember chronically I don't have all the data. But I know that I've been Sumy, Zhytomyr, Kharkiv, and Lwów, Kovel, Żytno, Lutsk, Grodno, Bialystok, Lublin.



And you were fighting the whole time as you were moving west?

Not all the time.

Some of it--

In fact, it was when we started fighting, the Germans were losing all the time. They were just running we have to just go after them, close the pockets what they say. We have to surround them, pocketing and, beat them up, or take them to prisoners of war. Most of them, the Russians mostly they killed them, which the Germans killed before too.

Was Majdanek the only camp you went through on your way back to Warsaw?

No. I've seen Majdanek was Sobibor, was Belzec, smaller camps.

You saw Sobibor in Belzec also?

Yeah, I went by.

What kind of conditions did you see in each of those?

When I came there, the Germans weren't there. The

Camps had been abandoned.

They ran away.

Did you see any Jews alive there or any other prisoners?

See, I think which I couldn't go all the way deep, because I was a Polack. And they didn't like it. It was only Jewish people.

And you couldn't reveal that you were really a Jewish person?

No, I did sometimes, but it wasn't good, anyway. We have a situation which you, whatever you do is not right. But finally, when I had the working on the command in Warsaw, I probably went every day to the community in Praga. I found out a lot of things.

And when you went, this is already in 1944 when you were at the Central Command. When you went to in gemeinde in Praga, did you tell anybody that you were really a Jewish person?

Oh, yes. There was only Jews.

And they knew that you had an alias, and you were living as--

Yeah, I told them. In fact, I registered that Marek Mosowich.

You did?

Yeah.

Did the people in the Polish army know that you had done this?

No. No.

Tell me about how long you were in Warsaw at the Polish command. You didn't stay there. I believe it was close to a year or something like a year, very close to a year. See, I don't have the chronicle thing.

That's OK if you don't remember the dates.

All I know that I worked there and my colonel was good to me. And I asked him vacation. He said, why not? Why not? I didn't tell him that I'm going to Berlin. This I got that form, there's forms for vacation. You go, and on that form I put down on duty to Berlin, and signed his name. I forged his name.

You knew that you had to leave Poland. You knew that you needed to leave Poland.

Oh, the minute I came to Russia-- who was it?

Oh, he's going to call back.

So the minute he told me that I am free, that I can go to the Polish army, I planned already ahead of time that I'm going. Someday, I'm going to go, leave him with their goods.

So you realized that when this time to be eligible, this was the first time you were eligible for any leave because of the war.

Right.

That you knew this was your opportunity to get out of Poland.

Right. Then I called-- I didn't call because we didn't call. We didn't have telephones. I wrote a letter to my sister, the one in Canada. She was in Łódź. And I wrote in that letter that I would like to leave the army and if you can do something on the side of the civilian side, you can do something, you know some people.

She said, yes, I can do something.

And she wrote you back?

Yeah, she gave me an address of a German Jewish family in Berlin, which helped people like me run away from the army, and put some papers, false papers like Berliner Jews. And the name was Snyder. And she was on Tempelhof Paradedstrasse 34.

In Berlin?

In Berlin. Yeah. I can never forget this. I can never forget that taxi which I went two hours from the Kaiser Platz to the Paradedstrasse. It took two hours with a taxi in the middle of the night.

So we know you got to Berlin. But tell us how you got out of Warsaw. You got the--

From Warsaw, I got first of all, I went with the train. I always can, as an officer, you can always go with the train.

And you're wearing your Polish uniform.

Polish uniform with my gun. Even in Berlin, I had my gun and the uniform. So I went to Łódź, and she gave me the address and everything. And one evening, I left them and went to Poznan, Posen. In Poznan, it all was planned, a train was going to Berlin directly. And it was stopped on the Polish-German border. And they were checked. So my sister told me all these things.

And she gave me also a few drinks. And when you traveled with that train at that time, even in America too if you are an officer, you're always with a wagon of officers. Is that the way?

Yes, the officers travel separately.

Right. So I went to the officer's wagon. And have a few drinks to offer them, especially before the border. I gave them more than I did. I did a little bit. But vodka, and they like vodka, Russians. He was a captain, a Russian captain. I think he was Jewish too. And I think that he had in mind also to run away. So you never talk to these things.

But one understood the other. And I said, one day he stopped on the border. And the NKVD, the green hats, and they start the door knocking in the door. I said, what do they want? These are sergeants. We have officers. Heck, we're not going to open the door. He gave him hell. And that's we went to border. We were drunk like hell. And we came in middle of the night, the Kaiser Platz. It was the German zone, I mean the Russian zone.

So this is 1945. The Russian--

The Russian zone. It was in--

The Germans have surrendered.

It was in June or end of May. I don't remember.

So the surrender was only a very short time.

Very short time. They were in trouble. When I came to Berlin, they was so afraid of me. They saw a uniform, a Polish Russian uniform. I didn't do anything in Germany. I don't want to do anything.

The only thing, but when I left the train and I had the suitcase and my gun, and I was still afraid for the Russians, the NKVD. Finally, I saw a Russian in the middle of the night patrolling. So I stopped there. And it was dark. And finally, I saw a gate, a big gate, with big backyards. You ring in the middle of the night, you ring them. And they always had a custodian. And I know German. I said to an old lady there, and she was scared to death.

They said, what can I do for you? I said, I don't want anything to do. Just give me a taxi or give me something that I should go to Tempelhof. So she said, my husband has a little taxi. You know that the [NON-ENGLISH], the small ones. I'll pay him any money. I mean in German everything. [NON-ENGLISH]. He gave me a [NON-ENGLISH]. They won't understand anyway.

So finally, she woke him up and he took me with a little car, two hours. And I said to him in German, I said, avoid all the big streets. Because you didn't want a Russian patrol to see you.

Right. I had enough of them. So finally, took me and took me and took me in two hours, and I have also German money. My sister gave me money. Deutsche marks. And after this, I said, how much do I pay you? He said 2 mark or something. I said, here's 5 marks.

Oh danke schoen, danke schoen. Danke schoen. He couldn't realize that I'm giving 5 marks. So it came the middle of the night. I came. And the lady was always conscious. People used to come to her, and she was--

She knew that her address was being let out, and that people were going to be coming to her.

Yeah, she didn't know when. We didn't have that much contact. But whoever comes whether today or tomorrow night, or day after tomorrow, somebody is coming. She's always conscious. And she has a daughter and a big dog. So that in a nice Paradesstrasse [NON-ENGLISH].

And she welcomed me very nicely. And we had a nice time.

Did she have your name ahead of time?

No. That's exactly what I'm saying. I just said--

She just knew people would come.

I just said that somebody told me that you can protect me, and I'll pay you.

Fine, fine, fine. Beautiful, fine. The first thing, the next day she said, I'm going to go with you. Your German maybe is not so good. So I'm going to go with you the Jewish Gemeinde, you saw in the Russian zone, which was on the Kaiser Platz. I said I'm not going there. I had enough of the Russians. No, no. You're going with me. You are German, German Jew.

So she took me there to the Jewish Gemeinde, and she gave me a Scheine. You know what a Scheine?

You have to explain what that is. Explain what that is.

A document that I'm born in Frankfurt am Main, and I've been during the war in Berlin. And I have to go back to Frankfurt am Main.

So this is another set of false papers for you.

Yeah. I had plenty of them. So finally, that was not the end. The main thing came now. So I would never believe that the American people are so naive. I'm telling you, very naive. Not that I'm telling you right now because when I came to Berlin and I was avoiding the Russians, and I came to Tempelhof. It was US zone. The command was there. And Tempelhof was the big airport, the US airport.

I came to Tempelhof to Zehlendorf where the US command was, because with my papers, that lady told me to go to the US command. And you are a deserter from the Polish army. They're going to help you. In fact, they helped me. Oh, an officer is an officer all over. So, an officer in the Polish army, the name, everything, beautiful. The only thing, you give me the gun. I gave them. It was a Tomashev gun. The gun and the uniforms, they gave me little other things-- food, fruit, and chocolate, cigars, cigarettes. No matter. I could eat a full day.

I packed my pockets. You completely, you don't know what you're doing with that. Finally, I did a good thing. Because later I needed the cigars, the cigarettes, and the chocolate. That helped me. That saved me. And they say also, you can sleep with us. We're going to have a transport from Berlin, because when you go out from Berlin you have to go through the Russian zone. From the Russian zone, you go back to the English zone.

I need to clarify one thing in the story. You have then two sets of papers. You have the papers she got you that say that you're a Berliner Jew from Frankfurt on Main. And you also went to the Americans. These I throw away.

You threw those away.

This is no good for me. I'm not a Polack. I'm not a non-Jew. So I was saved. At that time when I came to Berlin, that is the savior, that's it. No more. But I'm trying to understand. This woman told you to get the papers that say you're a German Jew. But you also went to the Americans at Tempelhof?

Yeah, because the Americans said-- wait a minute I have the papers as a German Jew. And then the Americans knew that that is a little thing. They helped people like me. And I came with a uniform, with a gun, with everything from the Polish army. They know that I'm not a German Jew.

I see. OK.

They knew it. They knew it. They helped us. But so what finally they want me to stay with them in that officer hall, and food and everything. I said, but I have to go back to my lady which she's expecting me. Finally, I persuaded them that I should go back. Because they wouldn't let me go. They knew the Russians and so forth.

So I went to the U-Bahn. You know the U-Bahn, on top? On the Tempelhof there is a U-Bahn, it's a metro. It was an U-Bahn. It was a straten.

So that was the overhead train?

Yeah.

I went to the U-Bahn to Zehlendorf. No, from Tempelhof to Zehlendorf.

OK.

There she was living there. I came to Zehlendorf in the evening, dark. And I see through. When before they stopped the train, the train goes every minute, every minute they have train, back and forth. It automatically closes up and down. When I saw the Russian green hats on-- that's why I'm saying they're very naive the Americans. Why would they let them in, I don't know. I ask later. I ask the American's command, why they do these things.

Anyway, they have some agreements with them. They come and pick up people which are deserters from the US zone. I don't know. So when I saw this, it was too late. I had to go out and the door's already closed. So I didn't know what to do. And I didn't have my uniform anymore. But I had a jacket. I have the jacket I'll show you. I have it still.

And I went, waited and waited. And I said, when you go out from the U-Bahn, you go down two steps. And then you have a kind of a terminal, or one floor of steps. And there was a German policeman without arms and two Russians. So I said, I'll try with the German, to go through that little door. And they kept holding a lot of people. I don't know who they were.

But I know that I wasn't kosher. Anyway, so I showed them. I went to the German policeman and pushed him, the policeman. He said, this is my [NON-ENGLISH]. It's my-- and he say, it's fine. It's all right. But the Russians said, nope. You wait here.

For you to wait right there.

Yeah. You go down. And I came down one floor I believe it was. And there was quite a number of people. And German, they didn't have enough Russian people. They have German people guarding the ones which were arrested. And then when they have plenty, they'll take him to the Russian command and check him out.

So I said, I'm in trouble now. I had still my documents in the Polish army and my picture. I have still the picture to show you. So I separated the picture and separated a lot of other things. And then I said, if they're going to tell me if they're going to take me over to the command, and I'll throw this whole thing away, and leave the picture and that's all. But it didn't happen this way.

So as I said before, every minute they stop the trains back and forth, back and forth. And when the trains opened up, the few soldiers my luck was that there were only three soldiers in that place. They were running right to the trains. So I said to the German policeman, I said, [GERMAN]. I'll tell it in German. [GERMAN] American chocolate, cigarettes, and they went crazy, when I said, here I have the [GERMAN], cigarettes and chocolate.

He didn't know what to say. And runs back and forth. He said, now, schnell, schnell, [GERMAN], schnell. You know what I'm talking?

Yes, he told you were very, very fast.

Schnell. Because a bahn, a train comes. I gave him the chocolate. I gave him the-- and I run. I'm telling you, I run. The doors automatically closed. My coat was going outside all the way.

And you got on the train.

And got back to Tempelhof and I gave him hell to the American soldiers there. Why would you do a thing like this? I'm risking my life, and you take it so easy.

So then did you stay with the Americans?

Yeah, I said, this time I don't move. So the lady came to me. And she talked with me. And also I asked the American soldiers who is in charge. I said, are you going to have a transport?

Oh, yes, we have every day transports. You can go tomorrow if you want to. We're going to send you to Kassel. You know Kassel?

Where is Kassel?

Near Hamburg, that's the English zone.

In the English zone.

Yeah.

But you didn't-- you wanted to go to the American zone though, didn't you?

But you have to go first to the English zone. You go through the Russian zone, English zone, American zone. The American zone is in the South, Munich, Frankfurt am Main is American. Kassel Hamburg is English.

So I ask him, with what are you going to take me?

You see the big Studebakers? The big ones. The first time I saw them. Yeah but the Russians are going to check. There was an officer, a captain, a young captain, American. If he's going to tell me to check, he's going to be trouble. He's not going to check you. Finally, we went quite a bit I would say roughly about 20 miles or so, until you get to the Russian zone. And he has opened up that big thing, let it through.

The gate.

The gate. And I made a hole in that deck, in that cover, the heavy cover.

There's a big tarpaulin.

Yeah, a tarpaulin. I made a hole, looked through if they're going to say something, hear something, I'm going to I'm going to run. So finally, it took him probably half an hour bargaining with him. I said, and I remember he said to him. It's my transport. I'm in charge. We have to go through and that's it. He went there and called somebody too. Finally, he let him through. When he let it through, I said that's it.

We came to Kassel. We came to Kassel. Again, there was an English command. And they were even nicer. Cup of tea, cup of tea, every minute, cup of tea. Cup of tea. Oh, it was heaven, just heaven.

Before we go, I want to find out what happened to you when you got to the British zone and you really were saved.

Yeah.

Let's look back at the whole war period. Because your experiences were very, very unusual for a Jewish person to have had.

Yeah, it was unusual, but there was a number of them who went the same way. I had a friend of mine in Brazil went the same route.

When you look back over them, did you think you would survive it?

No.

You see, I always thought that I'm not going to die, no matter what. I'm going I'm going to live. But if it comes, it comes. I did everything possible, that's all.

What gave you strength and hope? Was it God or the future, your family?

I didn't know much about God. But probably my bringing up, my parents. I remember my father. When my mother was killed, and we buried her on that backyard on the [NON-ENGLISH] street. He always said, one thing. I don't know where are you going to be, where I'm going to be. Remember the date when your mother died. And I remember that. It was Rosh Hashanah.

Did you ever think anything about the rest of the world, the way the war was being waged? You mentioned that it was well into the war before you knew what was happening to other Jews. Did you wonder where help was coming from?

Oh, help? I mean the Americans send a lot of help, the Joint, the UNRRA. When I was in Munich, I get a lot of help too.

We'll talk about the liberation part and what happened to you there in just a minute. When you look over the whole time of the war, what was the most painful experience about the time being in the army?

It was before the army, army was good. Army you eat. You forget about the tsuris. Before the army, you didn't have anything to eat. A lot of people fell like flies. One day you talk to him. The next day he's swollen and that's it.

Is there any particular thing about those years that you would want to share for the future, you want people to remember about this kind of thing that happened to you?

I wish you would read my articles. I have some articles too. When I was in the Kol Israel, in my good times.

Why don't you tell us about some of them. Tell us about some of the things you said in those articles. Because--

You have to read them. You have to read them. I'll show you the whole thing after.

What was your main point so that the tape knows what your main point was? What did you feel was the main thing that could be learned from what happened to you?

We learned that no appeasements was the main point. When you hear now that you're going to appease Cubans and Nicaragua, and all that, this is junk. This is bull. You never appease a dictator, never. Chamberlain appeased, peace of our generation. What happened? Millions of people died. That's the main thing which I learned. And I would never appease. I was in the Israeli army. I fought in the Israeli army. I was injured too in the Israeli army.

Do you want to go to what happened to you after the war now, or do you want to say anything more about the war?

Whatever you say.

I want you to be able to say what you feel is important about that. On the next tape, I want us to look at a few of the--

The main point is do not appease an enemy, never. He's going to respect you if you're strong. If you're

going to start to appease him, you lost right there.

That's what you really came away with was the message?

Right.

I think it's a very important message.

I wish a lot of Americans should do, should learn. Let's go to what happened to you after the war. I'd like to do a little bit about what happened. We stopped with you when you made it into the British zone. You didn't go home after the war ever again. Where did where did you go? Tell us how you got to Munich.

Where are you going to go? To whom? There was nobody. No home, ruins, junk. And as I said in my article in the monument of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, in the middle of that ruin. That's all.

So tell us how you got to Israel.

How I got to Israel? You see, the Haganah, they were always finding out things.

On the second tape, we want to tell how the Haganah found you.

Yeah.

And how you got to again fight. And we'll pick up--

Yeah you never stop fighting.

We'll pick up there.