

## **RG-50.091.0104**

### **Summary**

Ben Nebel, born in 1925, describes growing up in Lacko, Poland with an older sister (2 years older) and 2 younger sisters (aged 6 and 3 at the start of the war), and a younger brother (age 5 years old at the start of the war); his father, a World War I veteran who received pension from his service due to a shoulder injury; beginning Hebrew school at age 5 and public school at age 7; finishing his schooling and preparing to go to trade school as the War began; making pop at the bakery and giving the money he earned to help his family; his older sister moving with their rich Aunt to help with her two children and to receive a better education; the Polish army coming into their home within 2 to 3 days; deciding to leave and traveling to his Aunt for 2 weeks until the Germans arrived; the Germans providing a ride to the East and taking it to Gorlitz, 40km from his hometown, where he checked on his grandfather before walking/hitchhiking home; having to register for work in 1940; working on a highway and receiving payment from the Polish government every 2 weeks; wearing an arm band in 1941 after the Gestapo moved into town and not being allowed to travel far; having to leave highway work to work for the Germans in Nowa Sol in January of 1941; having to register for a food ration card; the Jewish police coming to get him in the Spring of 1941 and taking him to another forced labor camp in Rzeszow where they harnessed water to produce electricity; taking a weekend pass to visit his parents and found that they had nothing and were later shipped to Treblinka and killed; being shipped away with 300 other boys between the age of 16 and 30 years old and being sent to Tarnow ghetto where people lived in poverty but at least lived as humans; his Uncle residing in this town until he was deported the week prior to his arrival but his cousins still being there; the area being split into Ghetto A, where the workers resided and Ghetto B, where older people, people for prey and people used as target practice resided; being assigned to Ghetto B initially; being sent to a camp in Krakow-Plaszow; being sent to Birkenau in the Spring of 1943 and then onto Auschwitz and being assigned to Block 18A as a woodworker; the Polish people being sent out of Auschwitz before the camp was closed in mid-November of 1944; walking 3-4 miles to the railroad tracks before being sent on a Death March that lasted two weeks with no food and traveling West toward the German border; being given soup at night to eat and then sleeping 80 persons to a single boxcar; arriving to Vienna, Austria and onto Mauthausen; being assigned inmate number 219237 at Mauthausen; being assigned to Camp Ebensee in January of 1945 and walking for a day and a half to get there; his friend electrocuting himself on the fence there; the beatings decreasing by April of 1945 and after not working for 3 to 5 days seeing the American tanks rolling into the camp; the 281<sup>st</sup> Combat Engineer Company liberating them; weighing 98lbs at liberation; seeking out the 281<sup>st</sup> Combat Engineer Company when they were in Salzburg to work for them as a thank you for liberating him; helping in the kitchen cleaning pots and pans and being paid by the German government for the work; a Jewish Army soldier helping find his family through the Red Cross; being called before the German Consulate in Munich in November of 1945; packing his stuff in March of 1946 to go to the United States through Bremerhaven and arriving in the United States in May of 1946 in NY but not liking the hustle of NYC; heading to OH; being forced to sign up for the draft but writing a Congressman to not participate; finishing high school and attending the Cleveland Trade School for four years and learning to build houses; joining the carpenters union; getting

married at age 24 and having three children-2 daughters and 1 son; both daughters being married with 2 children each and his son working as an attorney in Orlando, Florida.