

RG-50.120*020

Blushtein, Ben Zion

- 1.00 Born June 10, 1924 in Domachov, parents named Sheindel and ????. His father died at age 24, leaving two children alone with their mother. His mother had many siblings, the majority of whom left Poland for the U.S. or England. The town was a major resort in the summer, attracting thousands of visitors from Warsaw. His mother remarried and gave birth to a girl. He went to Heder for his early years, and then to a Polish school. The city was 90% Jewish. Describes daily life and experiences with anti-Semitism.
- 1.30 Describes the beginning of the war. He and his family fled to Kolonya (????) a nearby town where they stayed with some Polish friends. They then returned home when the Germans reassured the Jews that they would not harm them. The Germans departed and the Russians occupied the village. He and some friends helped Jews sneak across the Russian border. Describes life under Russian rule. His mother gave birth to another boy and his older sister got married. In early 1941, he went to visit his sister in another town and then returned home.
- 2.05 Describes beginning of German invasion. He and his stepfather went to work at a hospital for the wounded. The S.S. arrived a few days later. They began by killing a Jewish man, then murdered a family and began searching for the rabbi. The rabbi and 38 youths were taken to haul flour and then shot. A Judenrat and police were established. Groups of Jews were taken to build bridges. The Jews were forced into a ghetto.
- 2.32 He went to work on a telephone line repair detail, traveling around the area, often staying at nearby villages. The Germans eventually informed the Jews that they would be transferred to another location and assembled them. The Germans raided the empty homes and returned the Jews to them. Describes life in the ghetto. On September 22, 1942, the Germans took a ????? of Jews and wiped out families whose members had fled. His entire family did not come to the assembly and hid in a bunker. They heard those who had assembled being shot.
- 3.00 In the bunker his family decided to commit suicide, as they had no possibility for escape. They all ingested chemicals and his stepfather died, while his mother, him and his siblings did not. They remained there for four days getting progressively weaker. His mother convinced him to leave and survive. He did so and was picked up by the Germans, who put him with a group of Jewish professionals.
- 3.18 They were taken to a camp a short distance from town. He convinced the Germans to return to the ghetto and bring her (his mother) to the camp. His mother refused to abandon her dying children and the Germans killed them.

- 3.22 After hearing of a mass escape by Jewish prisoners in a nearby village, he escaped along with three others. Describes rumors of Partisan activity. He joined a band of Jewish partisans in the forest. Describes experiences with partisans.
- 4.13 He was separated from the group by a German ambush. After obtaining food and clothing from some local gentiles, he wandered into the forest until he met up with the survivors of his partisan unit. They joined a unit of Russian soldiers waging guerilla warfare against the Germans, burning a dairy unarmed in order to prove their loyalty. The unit was divided in two shortly afterward.
- 4.45 Describes experiences with partisan unit – detonation of German trains, ambushes, the capture of a German fort, kidnapping the mayor, establishing a permanent base. They became a brigade under orders from Moscow. In spring 1944, a group of Jewish women refugees arrived seeking shelter. Under orders from Moscow, the partisans sent them away and the Nazis later killed them.
- 5.25 The Red Army liberated the area in July 1944. Describes events prior to this in which he was temporarily separated from the unit while conveying messages to the Hungarian army. Describes liberation – the Jews in the unit wondering where to go and what to do.
- 5.34 The Jews then joined the army. After participating in the liberation of ????, he parted from his friends, who were put into different units. Describes liberation of Majdanele, conquest of Berlin. He was then released from army service.
- 6.01 He returned to Poland where he rejected a job offer by his former commander. Describes events on journey back through Poland. He and several other Jews returned to Germany in a train full of repatriated Germans. He was temporarily interned in a British DP camp, but was then transferred to the American zone. He married a fellow Jewish refugee and had a son. They were transferred to Rosenheim. When a friend drowned and the government would not surrender the body, he stole it and buried him. He was then sent to France and taken to Haifa. From there he went to an internment camp at Netanya. He obtained an apartment for his family and then joined the army.
- 6.48 He as released from army service and went to work as a construction worker, and then as a plasterer. He helped a fellow partisan who came to Israel to resolve financial and legal difficulties. He raised a son and a daughter.
- 7.07 Describes the people from his hometown who died in the Holocaust.

END OF TAPE