

## **Summary of Oral History: Anthony Lazar**

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**This Summary was written by a USHMM Volunteer on [03/2022]**

Anthony Lazar was born to Sarah Kanse and David Lazar, who were from Hungary, in Marmuret-Sighet, Romania, and was the youngest of five brothers. His family was upper middle class, he attended a Romanian public school where he completed 6 grades and had a tutor for Jewish learning. His parents had two businesses: a bazaar where they sold assorted items including beds and toys and a tobacco and cigarette business. They were robbed in the late '20s and had sufficient funds to rebuild the store. His father also managed, the Black Shirts Party were permitted one day to kill and rob Jews. In 1940, Hungary occupied his area and took away his father's cigarette license and his Romanian pension due to his being Jewish, although he had lost an eye serving in the Hungarian Army. Also, Anthony was drafted into the Hungarian Army and received training with shovels, picks and brooms as there were no weapons. In December '41 he was taken by train to Poland and then marched to Russia, passing many corpses of Partisans shot in their wagons. He spent 18 months in Russia smoothing the sand in summer and shoveling the snow in winter. Their last fight in Stalingrad was in April '43 and then he went to Poland and after two weeks took a train to Hungary. There he recuperated for a week and returned to his Commando. There were signs on the streets that all Jews must go to the Ghetto in Maramuras. The city had a large Jewish population so had five Rabbis. The Romanians left for Romania and the Hungarians were in control. He did not go to the Ghetto, but was told to assemble in the synagogue. He brought his belongings and registered that he is leaving with his parents. His father was beaten and had no gold to turn in. None of his brothers were with him as they had been drafted and two had died. From the synagogue they were deported to Auschwitz. There were 85 people in his cattle car so it was standing room only. Dr. Mengele made the selection of his parents to the left and Anthony to the right for disinfection and striped uniform. He signed up for a mechanic work brigade and was accepted as a glazier and sent by train to a coal mine. Conditions improved with a straw mattress and some food. Anthony became a locksmith and succeeded by recalling his brother's work. When he finished one task, he volunteered for another including cleaning a chimney, building barracks and winterizing the walls so received extra food. The Russians were getting close in August 1944 so he was sent by train to Flossenbug. There he was given hard labor and wore a shawl so Anthony sneaked into another unit where he packed bricks around a hole to keep out the water. The Americans were coming so the prisoners were forced to march to Germany. They were given no food or water so he ate the flowers from the field. They reached Neunbuy Von Wald where the German citizens threw down potatoes and bread at them and the German soldiers shot towards these citizens. Anthony hid in a barn with a friend for three days until they heard foreign voices and found out they had been liberated. This was April '45. The Germans had shot 250 prisoners in the woods and the German citizens were forced to dig up the corpses and bury them. Only 500 of the 2,000 prisoners that marched with Anthony had survived. After three months he went to Bergen-

Belsen to look for relatives and found a cousin who was engaged and they made him a wedding. Anthony went home by train in 1946 and found two brothers who had survived. Russian soldiers were killing the Jews on the streets so Anthony took salt and left for Budapest to sell it. He agreed to immigrate to Israel but really wanted to return to Germany to go to the US where he had two uncles. When he arrived in Italy, he walked away from the Aliyah (immigration) organization and took a train to Germany. He arrived in the US in 1950 with his wife and year-old child where he became a construction contractor.