

RG-50.407.0032

Summary

George "Izaak" Blatt born in Kraków, Poland on May 26th, 1922; Pikas "Pavel" Blatt (Father), born in Żywiec, Poland; Paula Kant (Mother), born in Kraków, Poland; younger brother, Nahom Blatt; a middle class family living in the Jewish district of Kraków, Kazimierz; living on the Wisła River opposite a monastery; speaking Polish at home, able to speak Yiddish and German; Father's conscription into the Austro-Hungarian army as an officer during World War I; Father working as an administrator in Polish government until 1933; the family electrical business and factory; Father adhering to Orthodox dress customs but being clean shaven; attending Yeshiva until 13 years old, attending Schul until 14 years old; refusing to wear Orthodox garments except for a kippot; keeping Polish friends a secret from his father and Jewish friends; father's non-Jewish friends from the World War I warning him to leave Poland; Father believing in al Kiddush Hashem; on Rosh Hashanah 1939, an SS officer warning his father to never tell anyone that he is Jewish; his family moving to Wieliczka, Poland in 1941; staying behind in Kraków to sell the factory machinery; having the company of his friend Selner; Polish police contacts fixing him Polish papers and changing his name to Pier Hota; the creation of the Kraków ghetto in March 1941; working for an Austrian company laying concrete; mother, father and brother being rounded up in Wieliczka in 1942; witnessing a train full of people stopped on the tracks where he was working in Kraków; never seeing his parents and brother again; traveling through the sewers into the ghetto to visit his aunt; being arrested outside of the Kraków ghetto for throwing food over the wall; being bailed out of the ghetto jail by a Jewish Gestapo named Brodman; hearing his brother was in a labor camp in Stalowa Wola, Poland; Selner following his girlfriend into a labor camp near Płaszów; Nazi's surrounding the camp, Selner escaping; hiding Selner in the attic for two weeks, contracting lice but not the typhus from him; learning of a route to Hungary through the Tatra Mountains (part of the Carpathian Mountains); escaping Poland in September 1943 with 20 others; taking a train from Płaszów, Poland to Czarny Dunajec, Poland; crossing the Dunajec river; reaching Prešov, Slovakia; driving to Budapest, Hungary; Zionist movement in Budapest having a route from Płaszów Concentration Camp to Budapest; reaching Sátoraljaújhely, Hungary by the end of September 1943; living in a small hotel with Selner; seeing the Munkaszolgálat; the German invasion of Sátoraljaújhely in March 1944; Selner being taken to Balaton Labor Camp in Hungary; escaping to Satu Mare, Romania and being taken in by a Jewish family still pretending to be a non-Jewish person; Germans invading Satu Mare, Romania; returning to Budapest via train; getting Hungarian Volksdeutsche papers under the name Rákóczi; attempting to escape to Israel; being caught, drugged and taken to Garany Camp (near Sátoraljaújhely) in Hungary and interrogated; being transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in September 1944; arriving in the day by regular train, passing the 'arbeit macht frei' sign; smelling the burning; describing the people in Birkenau as walking dead; seeing a childhood friend (Weiss-Klein) who was a Sonderkommando in Birkenau; this Sonderkommando tattooing A-12831 on his arm, giving him a "good" uniform and 50 dollars, directing him to the line of people going to Auschwitz, telling him to survive to tell this story; telling the Kommandant in Auschwitz that his name was Pavoski; working in the Union factory as an electrician making rockets; falling asleep on the job, being taken to the political department building to receive 25 lashings, being spared by the factory foreman; the political

department building being a place where people from overseas were being taught how to interrogate prisoners; Hank Hessler being the Kommandant of Auschwitz at that time, Oswald Kaduk as the Rapportführer; telling an Italian historian about the swimming pool in Auschwitz after the war, not being believed; returning to Auschwitz with wife to make sure he didn't dream the existence of the pool; evacuating Auschwitz in January 1945; the death march from Auschwitz through Czechoslovakia; being loaded onto open train cars and transported to Mauthausen; being kept outside for two days and two nights, sent into hot showers and then back outside; he and the other electricians being sent to Melk Concentration Camp in Austria for 4 weeks; being given a new identification number (119-157) on a metal wristband; returning to Mauthausen; walking from Mauthausen to Gusen I in February or March 1945; being liberated by American troops in May 1945; living in a villa in Steeg, Austria; registering with the Red Cross in Linz, Austria (Oberösterreich region); reclaiming his Jewish identity; being too afraid to return to Kraków; going to Mestre, Italy with the Jewish Brigade; finding his aunt in Padova, Italy; studying medicine at the University in Padova for half a year; helping run a transit Kibbutz near Rome in 1946; joining the Brihah under the instruction of the Haganah in Rome; organizing and "illegally" smuggling Jewish refugees from eastern Europe to Palestine; meeting his wife in the Kibbutz in 1946; getting married in Alvaro Romano, Italy in 1948; being sponsored to immigrate to Australia in September 1949; working in a factory; having two children, Paul and Eddie; Shabbat dinners with his sons and three grandchildren.