

## **RG-50.407.0123**

### **Summary**

David Sternschuss was born in a small town in Czechoslovakia on November 6, 1915. He had two sisters and three brothers. His family was religious, and he attended both a Jewish school (heder) and a secular school where they spoke Czech. At home, his family spoke Yiddish. During the war he also learned Hungarian and Russian. At 16 or 17 his family moved to Prague where he learned to work as a glazier. His mother and older sister died before the war. Although it was difficult to understand Mr. Sternschuss, he seemed to say that he joined the Czech army in 1939, and that the Czechs were very good to him, even allowing him to keep kosher. Because of the German invasion the Czech army disbanded. He came home, and I believe he said that he married and had two children.

In 1940, the Germans took him and one of his brothers to work in labor camps. Apparently, his younger sister stayed back with his father. He worked in a labor camp at first in Czechoslovakia (the Czech part) but lived with many others outside the labor camp. They were overseen by Hungarian and Slovak soldiers, some who treated them well, others not. Between 1942 and the end of 1944 he worked in a series of labor camps in Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Ukraine. He usually worked on a railway for very long hours and then went "home" to nearby villages where he and his fellow workers stayed. Generally, they were able to get sufficient food once back in the villages. Sternschuss did not say how he was treated, but he did say that he was resigned to die.

After the Russians liberated his labor camp Sternschuss returned to his home in Czechoslovakia and went back to work as a glazier. By then another family had occupied the house, but he stayed with them and after a few weeks they left. By late 1945 people began to come home from the concentration camps. For a while, he had five or six girls stay with him. It sounded like he said that his daughter returned also, but he says no more about that. His younger sister also returned. He again says that he married in Prague. He never mentioned what happened to his brothers or father but presumably they were killed. He and his wife immigrated to Israel and stayed for two years. But conditions were very primitive, his wife got sick, and they ended up going to Australia. He again worked as a glazier. His sister meanwhile had gone to the United States. He described life in Australia as okay until 1992 when his wife died of a heart attack. He and his wife had one son.

Sternschuss's daughter-in-law suggested he give his testimony. Asked for a message to future generations, he said that his son already knew what happened to him. His son accompanied him and his mother back to Czechoslovakia in 1991.