

RG-50.407.0272

Summary

Steve Arnott was born January 3, 1923 in Friedland, Germany, which had 14-15 Jewish families. His parents were Louis and Ella (Budwitzky) Arnstroff; his sister, Miriam, was the oldest and he had two brothers, Max and Alfred. Steve's first name was Zelmar before he changed it. His father, a horse and cattle dealer, was born there in 1883. His family had a comfortable living and kept a kosher home.

By the time of Kristallnacht, they were the last remaining Jewish family that had not emigrated. He, his father and brothers were arrested and held for fifteen days. Before traveling to Berlin to seek exit papers, the father had to sign away his properties without compensation. As well, one of the sons had to rotate through prison to ensure his return.

His brothers obtained permits to go to a farm in Britain, through the aid of a relative in Manchester. His sister and he later received similar permits, though his parents had to remain. He departed in August 1939 just weeks before the war began. Steve stayed at a refugee camp for four weeks before starting work on a dairy farm in Lancashire. In July, 1940 he and his brothers were interned before they were sent to Australia in September where they remained until November 1941. He describes mistreatment on the ship.

In 1941, they were interned in Hay and treated well before they became soldiers. They worked with the Allies after the Normandy invasion to interrogate German prisoners. Steve confessed to once striking a prisoner but he was disciplined and regretted his action. He left the army in 1947 returning to England. Steve learned after the war that his parents were sent to Theresienstadt and ultimately to Auschwitz where they perished.

He married in 1948. His wife was born in Breslau but left Germany for London on a Kindertransport. They left for Australia in 1949 and he became a salesman after the war for 27 years.