

Why don't you tell me about the reunion with your brother?

Yes.

OK. And start from the beginning, because we have to start fresh.

When my wife's sisters were evacuated to west Germany to Landsberg, to a camp, a DP camp-- I married the younger sister as my wife. So I went with her. We stayed in Munich. So I said, I want to go see the list of all the survivors.

Munich had a headquarters. And the lists were printed on all the walls around the building inside. So I looked at my town, from my town-- to Poland, and then my town. I noticed my brother is living. One of my brothers is survivor.

And I also noticed a sister of my best friend who I went to school with before the war is also a survivor. And she is in that camp where my two sisters knows her there, in Landsberg. So I said, I'm going there right away. And by streetcar, it took about 20 minutes to get there, to the camp. And I went there. And I looked her up.

And when she saw me, she just couldn't believe it. It was a very emotional reunion with her. And I said to her, you know what? My brother, Solomon, is living in the French zone. I don't know how to get to where he is.

You say your brother Solomon? He is here. I say, here? Yeah, he came here, and he's in the camp. As a matter of fact, he stays in my room here. But he went out for the night to see a movie. They had movies showing in the camp. This is the American zone.

So I said, a movie? I'm so exhausted, I said to her, and I want to go to sleep. And she said, well, lay down on the cot here. She had cots all over. That's your brother's cot. But we'll manage to get another one here.

So I laid down, fell asleep. And about 11:30 at night, he comes back. He noticed I was asleep. He didn't know who I am. I'm nothing.

She said to him, the friend, why don't you go over and look who is sleeping there? He looked. He said to her-- he walked back to her, said, I don't know. I hadn't seen him for six years, my brother.

She said, look again. Then he goes over to the other side of my face. And he said, that's my brother. He woke me up from my best sleep.

And the reunion was so emotional. We were both crying without stop. And that's the way I met him after the war in Munich-- then in Landsberg, I mean, the camp.

And from then, I had to go back to Poland. I went back to Poland again from there. And later on, I came back to Germany And stayed with my brother in the French zone. He lived in French zone.

And I took my wife there also. She was not my wife yet. But we got married in that small town in Germany, in Saulgau. It's a very small town near-- not far from Constance, Bodensee. I know, here, that's a familiar town.

In the wedding, we had to bring a rabbi from another town, from Ulm, also a DP camp. The big camp had a rabbi there. He came in to perform the wedding. It was outdoors.

The whole small town came to that wedding, the Germans, because they haven't seen a wedding like that in 50 years, they say, in that little town. And we got married from there. And from there, we went back. We came to the United States.

Tell me. Wasn't there a big religious ceremony?

Yes. The rabbi performed a real orthodox ceremony, with breaking the glass, and everything. They say that was, for them, so unusual. The people were so anxious to see it. We lived with a German family there. And they said they haven't seen it for 50 years, a wedding like that in that town.

Very few Jewish people lived there before the war even. There, only one person lived there, a very famous person. Albert Einstein's first cousin lived nearby in a little town near that little town, [INAUDIBLE] Einstein. I met him. I met him. He came to the wedding. We invited him. And he was at the wedding.

It's a little town called Buchau. This is the only town in Germany where a synagogue had only a bell, a ringing bell like a church. This is the only synagogue in all of Germany who had a bell, a ringing bell.

OK. Let's now go back a little bit to liberation. You said you thought it--

Yeah. After we were liberated, what happened is they segregated everybody by nationality-- Frenchmen in this block, Poles in this block, Russians in this, Czechs in this, Belgium here.

And there were so many blocks, every block, it was many more that have two blocks for second groups. So our group was very small. So we stayed with the Poles together.

We hanged out the flag, a Polish flag, and a blue and white flag, the Israeli flag in front of the barrack. Everybody had to hang out their flags. So we made it out from different pieces of cloth.

So the Russian soldiers, officers, would form the honor guard and marched in unison-- there were a group of about 30 of them-- to every block, and saluted, and had a speech. The captain spoke. And when he came to our block, it was very moving. I can remember.

He said-- the officer, he said, he knows what happened to the Jewish people. He knows what the Germans did. And he knows that you are a few of the survivors here. He knows also that we don't have a home where to go to.

And he finished and saluted it. And it was very moving. We all cried. That was the incident, what happened after the liberation.

Tell me a little bit about, in those first few weeks after liberation, did the British-- did they help you--

Yeah, the--

--give you supplies like toothbrushes?

Afterwards, about two weeks later, they brought in food and supplies, fed everybody. Kitchens were set up. You get food. And they processed you-- the name, which country you came from, where we were. They gave you DP cards, identity cards.

What about clothes, and toothbrush, and things like-- did they give you--

They give these things out, yes, to everybody. And they had put up running water in the blocks already, because there was no water running before. And they had also disinfection and lousing for people.

They had that white powder. They sprayed it, everybody all over. And constantly, every week, they did that. They were afraid of typhus breaking out, which in the other camp, typhus broke out. It was a disease. It killed a lot of people there after the liberation.

And also another incident-- there was a group of musicians in the camp during the war. The Germans had the prisoners, musicians. And they were Poles. There were about 30 of them, a group.

And in that camp we are in-- it was a military camp, actually-- there was a drugstore there in the camp. I didn't care about going to a drugstore. I didn't look for medicine.

What happened is these Poles went into the drugstore, into the basement. They found bottles with alcohol and just loaded up, and took out the alcohol from the bottles, in bottles, and started to drink. And they didn't realize that was wood alcohol, the poisonous alcohol. And all of them got poisoned.

After the liberation, 30 of these people died in the camp from wood alcohol poisoning. That was such a horrible thing to hear what-- they were screaming and had convulsions. It was-- we couldn't-- we had to run away and hide in the rooms. What was going on? This was after the liberation these things happened.

And what about a big religious ceremony after?

After the liberation, what happened when we stayed there-- we stayed a couple of weeks in Bergen-Belsen. We stayed there after the liberation. First of all, the war lasted another three weeks. But we stayed there about six more weeks.

Well, they found out in a small town nearby called Celle, C-E-L-L-E-- there was a small town where a German family with a small synagogue, and they hid it from the Nazis all these years and protected the Torah, the scroll, the holy books in the basement. And the British came and liberated it.

And they went to the British and told them. There was a small synagogue here. We protected it. You shouldn't-- the synagogue was a little bigger than this house. And the British told us, we have to go there. It's looking out only for the Jewish prisoners, war prisoners.

We were liberated. So we went there. And we told them-- they took us by truck there to the little town. It was about 10 miles away. And on Friday services, there was a British chaplain, a Jewish rabbi from the British army in a uniform.

He went to the basement and took out the scroll, the Torah. And he walked up with the Torah to where the ark was-- there was no scrolls in there-- and made us walk behind him. And each row of the whole synagogue was British officers and soldiers. And they were making films of this.

And we walked up on the bimah like a stage, where the Torahs are sitting under the curtain. And there was a table. And he laid down the scroll on the table. And he conducted the service, Friday night service.

It was very moving. Even the English cried. And then they took us back to the camp. And we stayed there, like I told you. And later on, we left.

[INAUDIBLE].

OK. Go ahead and tell me about that.

After, everybody grabbed the potatoes and turnips and went home to eat. It lasted only for about a day and a half. The following day, everybody was hungry again, no food. And nobody-- we're not liberated yet. So everybody was walking around in the camp, looking for something to eat.

So the SS came and said to us on a loudspeaker, we have some bread and canned goods for you up there on trucks, waiting there. So everybody's running to that area. So the major from the SS, a doctor-- you can tell he's a doctor, he wears special insignia here-- came and stood in front of these trucks.

And he said to us, please, do me a favor, do not touch any of that food. Do not touch it. Don't it don't take it, he said. Everybody said, why? It's all poisoned. You're all going to die if you eat that.

So I just moved back with my friends, said, forget it. I'm not going to eat it. I lost a lot of weight in here. So a lot of them were screaming their heads off. We're going to die anyway from starvation. Better die with a full stomach. Some

of them were saying that.

So the general was pleading with them, the doctor. Please wait another 24 hours. You're going to be free. The English are going to be here. Nobody believed them either.

People in those days were very-- we saw so many things in the past. What the Germans were talking and doing were two different things. They always lied to you, the Germans. They'll tell you you're going to a lousing in a bath. And they were killing people there.

That's why a lot of people don't realize, don't understand. How could so many people go without resistance, to fight against them? Because they misled people. They didn't tell you what they were doing. They had false signs on the doors, [NON-ENGLISH], in those gas places. They were gassing people.

And I was aware of these things already before. I was the first one, actually, to notify people what the Germans were doing with human beings, before Auschwitz existed. The day the Germans invaded Russia in June 1941, the same day, they started to kill Jewish people.

In the town where I was born, nearby, a place called Chelmno, I was the only one-- actually, with another man-- to escape from that place, from Kolo. When I arrived in Lodz in the ghetto to tell those people what happens to the people, they never believed it. Even the people in Lodz ghetto didn't believe what they were doing with them. They were going outside. Nobody volunteered.

The Germans were telling, we need volunteers to go to the Russian territory. We occupied so much land. We need people to work on the farms. So they believed them. And they took them to kill them. That's the way they misled the people.

They made people also lay down their clothes, and put the names on their clothes, and made the people pay money for the trucks, for the gasoline. They make them pay four marks for the gasoline to take them to the extermination. So everybody say, if they were going to kill us, why would they take the money from us? Why would they make us pay for gasoline?

They made such the tricks. They used such psychology, how to get the people to be exterminated. So the people didn't realize what happened to them. But I knew already then. I knew already then not to trust them, because I had experience from back, from Chelmno where they were exterminating the people.

But when I came to the ghetto in '42, the people, the leadership in the ghetto made me be quiet. Don't make panic in the ghetto. Be silent.

They knew. I told them what happened, the leadership. And they survived the war because of me from the Lodz ghetto. I met them after the war-- in Lodz, where I met my wife.

How did you get out of Chelmno?

I wasn't taken to Chelmno. What happened is in Kolo, in the city of Kolo, they started to take out groups-- 300 a day, 400 a day. So I grew up with Polish people together. I grew with-- I lived with them together. I was next door neighbors with Poles. My best friends were Poles, went to school together.

So one of those boys, my friend from school, his brother was taken by the Germans as a truck driver to take the people from the town to Chelmno. They say, from there, they're going to the Russian territory to work on farms. When he came back, he noticed they were taking the people from his truck and to put in the gas-- to trucks, which has gas, carbon monoxide.

The Germans had built special vans in the beginning, big vans. They could put 50 people in a van. And the exhaust pipe from the trucks, from the gas from the trucks, were going into the van inside. It was hermetically closed. And the carbon

monoxide was killing the people inside.

And from the trucks, from this truck, van, those truck drivers had to take the bodies out and take them into the wooded area where they had grabbed many people from the town, strong people, with already prepared ditches-- dig ditches, big ditches-- and threw the bodies in, and covered them up. And when he came back, he told me, listen, to me.

My brother could not sleep all night. He wouldn't talk to nobody. He couldn't eat, what he saw there. So he crossed himself. He said, please, I gave my honor to my brother not to tell nobody. But I'm telling it to you. Do not go there.

He wouldn't tell me the rest of it. But I found out later how they were doing it. They were killing all these people there. They killed 380,000 Jews there, the Germans, in Chelmno. That's before Auschwitz existed, before anybody knew anything, in 1941.

After that happened, in December of '42, they're starting to kill the people. And I knew it already then. And I told to my brother and my sister-- two sisters, I had. She survived in the Lodz ghetto with me. The rest of my family was killed also in Chelmno.

So that's what happened. That's why I knew. That's why I knew what they were doing. When I came to the ghetto, I already knew then.

And the people in the ghetto didn't know anything. The leadership didn't know anything. When I was working in the ghetto in one place-- well, that's a long story.

Going back to liberation for a minute, did the people pick up a Jeep?

Yes.

Tell me about that.

When we were liberated, everybody was so enthusiastic, so emotional. People were so happy that they grabbed this Jeep and were carrying the Jeep. British soldiers got out. They were carrying the Jeep in the air, all the prisoners.

They were so happy to see the British, that we were free. Finally, we're free. They were really free. Then they started to believe they're free. They were carrying this Jeep in the air, walking through the camp all around.

That day is an unforgettable, unforgettable day, that we were so-- on the other hand, when we realized later that we have nobody to go to, that was a different story. But the first two days, the emotional outburst, the happiness was indescribable. You cannot describe this, the emotions from the people, from the prisoners, from all the people.

When they announce to you the first time in all these years that you are a human being. They are people. You're not treated like nobody, worse than animals.

The Germans were petting their dogs while hanging people. They were petting their dogs, making nice to dogs, while the people were hanging. That's how brutal they were, how cynical. There were thousands of them doing like that. And after the war, they disappeared, a lot of them.

Did you live in a DP camp at all?

Yes, for a while.

Were you in in Landsberg?

Bergen-Belsen, yeah. I stayed there for about six weeks.

But not Landsberg, when you went through there.

No. Only the sisters stayed there. I went away from there. I lived in Berlin for a while with civilian family. It was a Jewish-- the wife was Jewish, the husband was German. That's how they survived the war. And they had one son. And he was a friend of mine also.

We stayed together a lot. I lost track of him and of the family afterwards. I lost track of a lot of people I haven't seen since then. I hope, when we go to Miami-- now we have a gathering there next week-- I'll meet some people I haven't seen him for so many years.

OK. I think [AUDIO OUT]. Let us get going.

Ready.

Number six.

Set.

When we looked out through the window, and we saw the tanks passing by-- some of them with a white star, some of them with British markings, with British flags-- we all jumped up and hugged each other. We were so happy to see this happening, that we are finally going to be free. And we waved handkerchiefs out through the window to them.

They saw us. We were standing up, some of them. And we were waving to them. But they didn't come to us. They went to the town, to the railroad junction, to Bergen to liberate the town.

And we said, why? Everybody had a big let down-- said, where are they? They went, and they didn't see us, probably. They went by to the little town.

So the following day, in the morning, they came into the town to liberate us, to camp. They liberated first the camp-- the town, Bergen. And the next day, in the morning, 9 o'clock, they showed up in the camp.

And when they arrived, that was the most emotional time, when we are liberated. They arrived at the time exactly the Germans say. But they told us something different. They told us the Red Cross is going to take us over from Switzerland.