

Naval Oceanographic Office

NINTH ANNUAL DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST OBSERVANCE

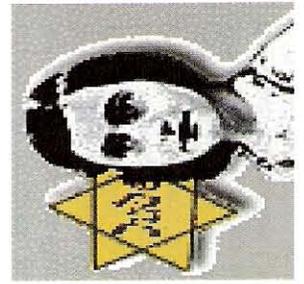


Guest Speakers:

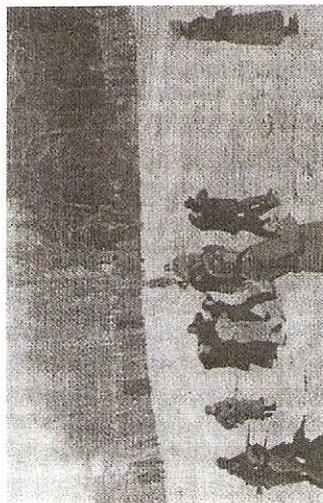
**Sigmund
Boraks**

**Martin
Wasserman**

**15 April 1999 ~ 1100
Room 162**

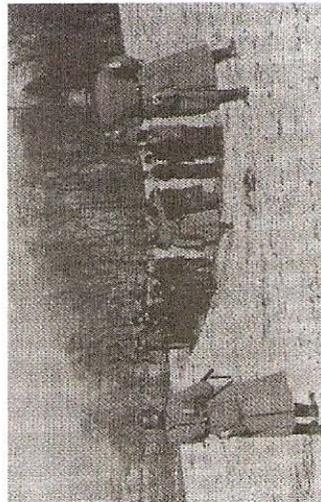


Execution of residents of Bochnia, Poland, in Uzbornia Grove near the town: December 18, 1939. A German firing squad shot fifty-one inhabitants of the area after members of a resistance group *Orzeł Biały* (White Eagle) attacked a German police station two days earlier. (Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi War Crimes, Warsaw, Poland)

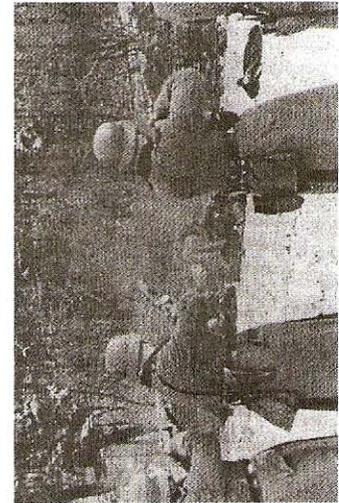


The prisoners are marched to the execution site.

German police line up the victims.



The execution.



1999 Days of Remembrance Ceremony

I Opening Remarks

Steve Faber
Program Coordinator

II Invocation

Chaplain John K. Manila
Navy C.B. Base, Gulfport MS

III Captain's Address

CAPT Larry Warrenfeltz
Commanding Officer,
Naval Oceanographic Office

IV Guest Speakers

Mr. Sigmund Boraks

Mr. Martin Wasserman

V Closing Remarks

Mr. Joe Fleming
Deputy EEO Officer

Excerpt from "Riga" (a ghetto within occupied Soviet Union, 1941) -- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum publication:

The columns of Jews advancing from Riga, comprising about one thousand persons each, were herded into a cordon (funnel shaped), formed in such a way that it narrowed greatly as it continued into the woods, where the pits lay. The Jews first had to deposit their luggage before entering the copse (permission to carry luggage progressed, they had to deposit their valuables in wooden boxes and, little by little, their clothing - first overcoats, then suits, dresses and shoes, down to their underclothes, all placed in distinct piles according to the type of clothing. On this particular day (30 November 1941), the air temperature in Riga was -7.5°C (-18.5°F) at 7 AM, and -1.1°C (30°F) at 1 PM. On the previous evening, there had been an average snowfall of 7 cm (2.7 in).

Stripped down to their underclothes, the Jews had to move forward along the narrow path in a steady flow towards the pits, which they entered by a ramp, in single file and groups of ten. Occasionally, the flow would come to a standstill when someone tarried at one of the undressing points...In the pits the Jews had to lie flat, side by side, face down. They were killed with a single bullet in the neck, the marksmen standing at close range - at the smaller pits, on the perimeter; at the large pit, inside the pit itself - their semi-automatic pistols set for single fire. To make the best of available space, and particularly of the gaps between bodies, the victims next in line had to lie down on top of those who had been shot immediately before them. The handicapped, the aged, and the young were helped into the pits by the sturdier Jews, laid by them on top of the bodies, and then shot by marksmen who in the large pit actually stood on the dead.

In this way, the pits gradually filled.

Sigmund Boraks, born Symcha Boraks on July 18, 1925 in Wielun, Poland, made a solemn vow to his wife Margot on her deathbed in December 1994, that he would talk about his experiences during the Holocaust; he has suppressed this all his life until then. His wife felt that this would be good therapy for him, as well as a way to teach the world about man's humanity toward fellow men, so that an event such as the Holocaust would never happen again. Mr. Boraks has spoken about his experiences to many groups around Louisiana, including churches, schools, town councils, city halls, and anywhere people want to know more about this tragic part of history. His experience relates the time frame from September 1939, with the German invasion of Poland, to the middle of 1940 when he was in the **Cracow Ghetto**. From there he recalls his experiences until the middle of 1942 in the **Czestochowa Ghetto**, when his parents and sister were shipped off to the Treblinka death camp, and only he was left behind. He recounts details of his experience at **Blizyn** labor camp in Poland from 1942 to early 1944, when he was shipped off to the infamous **Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp**, and was issued the identification number B-2039 (still tattooed on his arm). With the advancing Russian army and the evacuation of Auschwitz, he is led on a Death March to Oranienburg, Sachsenhausen, Kaufering, until his arrival at **Dachau concentration camp**. On April 29, 1945, Mr. Boraks was liberated by American forces. He moved to New Orleans in 1952, and presently has 4 children (2 sons and 2 daughters) in addition to 7 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. He is currently a member of the New Americans Social Club, an organization comprised of Holocaust survivors who live in the New Orleans area.

Martin Wasserman was born Moszek Wasserman on June 25, 1925 in Warshau, Poland. At the age of 14, he was sent with his family to the **Warschau Ghetto**, from 1941 to 1942. In 1943 he was sent to **Radom, Poland**, to work in a gun manufacturing company. Later in 1943, he was sent to **Auschwitz** for one day, from where he was selected to go to Vahinger, Germany, doing an assortment of jobs until 1944. During 1944 he went on to Hesselthal, Germany, to work in a cement factory which produced, among other items, bunkers. Between 1944 and 1945 he was sent to **Dachau**, Germany, until his liberation by the Seventh Army (CJC Detachment) on 29 April 1945. Following his liberation, Mr. Wasserman was sent to St. Ottilien Monastery (located between Lansburg and Munich) for medical care. Upon his release, he was offered employment at St. Ottilien for the world O.R.T. union D.P. hospital, police department. About a year and a half later, he moved to Munich-Pasing, Germany, and obtained employment with the International Rescue Committee until 1950. Between November 14 and 29, 1950, he traveled to New Orleans aboard the **USNS Gen. Harry Taylor**. Upon arriving in the United States, Mr. Wasserman had a job waiting with the ETN fur company. Eventually he was called to the U.S. Army and was sent to Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD, and to Camp Pickett, VA, between 1951 and 1953. Following his service, Mr. Wasserman was awarded U.S. citizenship and returned to New Orleans, where he presently resides. He has married and is the father of 3 children (2 sons and 1 daughter) and has 5 grandchildren.