Tom Figueras

Tom Figueras was born in Uzhorod, Czechoslovakia in October 1927.

His last name at birth was Nadelstecher but he changed it after the war. His father was a dentist. One brother was a musical prodigy who played the violin in the orchestra in the Buchenwald concentration camp

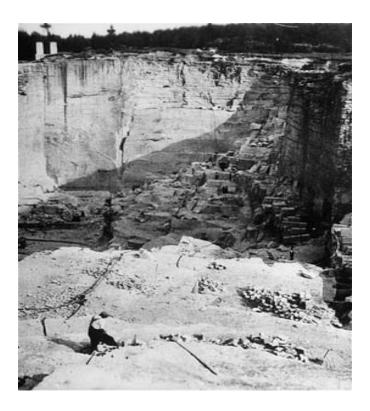until he was sent to Bergen-Belsen.

Tom had another brother who was a heavy smoker who traded his bread for cigarettes in the concentration camp. Nobody in his immediate family survived.
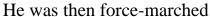
The Nazis came to his town in March 1944 and within two months of their arrival Tom was in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

He was there for only 3 days before he was transported to the Gross-Rosen cluster of camps in Germany.
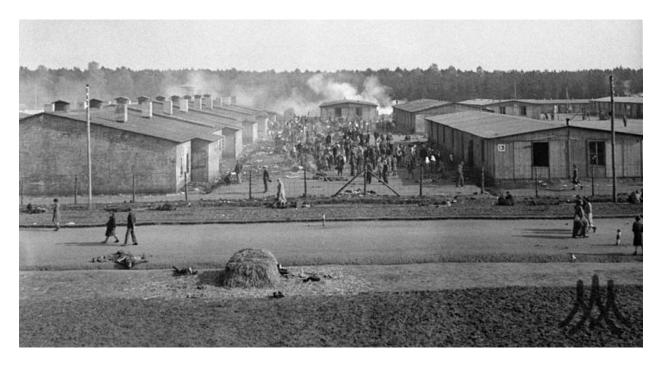
By November Tom's leather shoes were ruined and he was forced to wear ill-fitting wooden clogs which damaged his feet. By then the Nazis had stopped shipping prisoners to Auschwitz to be killed so he ended up in a hospital where he was able to stay for 3 months.

He was then force-marched

to Bergen-Belsen

but most of the others with him did not survive. Anyone who could not walk was shot. He got out of Bergen-Belsen by getting himself on a transport to a town in Germany called Hildesheim.

The Jewish laborers were housed in a synagogue there. His job was to pull dead bodies out of bomb shelters but he often found food in those shelters.

American bombers destroyed the town so Tom was marched back to Bergen-Belsen. Conditions there had deteriorated in the weeks he had been away. He was liberated by the British on April 15, 1945.