Marcel, thank you so much for joining us and being willing to be our First Person today. We have just an hour, a short time, and you have so much to share with us so we will start right away if that's ok.
Sure.
Before we turn to the war years with Germany's invasion of Poland in September 1939, followed by their attack on France in May 1940, let's start first with you telling us a little bit, what you can, about your parents and their life before the war began.
Well, my father was a presser. He pressed women's clothing. And my mother was a seamstress. She had to take lessons to come to the United States, to be able to come here.
You shared with me that your father, although he wasn't educated in a formal sense, had an incredible number of languages that he knew.
He spoke several languages. He picked them up as he went through life. He learned Turkish, Russian, several Slovakian languages.
And picked up French when he moved to France.
I hope so.
Marcel, both of your parents were born in Romania and then left for Constantinople, Turkey. Why did they leave Romania and move to Turkey?
Well, my mother had been born and they had a big pogrom there and they decided that it would be better, for safety purposes, to leave that country.
And a pogrom was attacks on Jewish people, assaults on them.
Oh, yeah. They were killing them.
So they moved to Turkey. Why Turkey? Do you know?
Because they were being accepted by the Turkish whereas any other country wouldn't have accepted them.
Your mother, I believe, had 15 siblings.
Yes.
How large was your extended family between your mother and your father?
She had 15 brothers and sisters but not many of them survived because of the pogrom and all of the problems. Life was not that great in those days.
And speaking of that, your parents met in Turkey. They married. Then they moved to Paris. Why did they go to Paris?
That's a good question. My father's family moved to the states. My mother's family moved to France. When my father married my mother, he decided that he would join her family rather than go with the other family.
Tell us a little bit about your siblings. You were the fourth. You came a little later.
I'm the accident.
[Laughter]
So tell us about your siblings.
What would you like to know?
Your oldest was your sister. Right?
My eldest was born in Constantinople. She went to France with my parents and became educated in France. It was highly educated at the time for a female to get educated like that.
And then your two brothers were born, like you were, in Paris. And a little bit later that will become significant and we'll talk about that.
Do you know when they moved to Paris after leaving Constantinople, Turkey, what was life like for them in the pre-war years in Paris?

Well, it was comfortable. My father looked for a place to make money, on the job as a presser, or learned how to be a presser. And he maintained that job for almost all of his life. I never thought presser was a career.
But it's what he did, including later, coming to the United States. But their life was reasonably comfortable and safe?
Very comfortable. My mother used to sew for the whole neighborhood. She was a very good seamstress.
So they lived a reasonably comfortable life. Then in May of 1940 Germany invades France. Paris becomes an occupied country. And -- city. And your parents would remain in Paris until 1942.
We did.
Tell us what life was like, to the best of your knowledge, during that two-year period of living there under the direct occupation of the Germans in Paris.
From 1940 to 1942 there was nothing stopping us from continuing our life. After 1942 it became a different story.
Before we turn to 1942, when the Germans first attacked Paris, there was, of course, bombardments of Paris. There's a couple of incidents that you know about.
Yes. I was told, later in life, that as my mother was running towards the shelters, from the bombardment, my blanket was hit by shrapnel and it burnt a hole in my blanket. And when my mother got into the subway station, she found the burnt blanket. Maybe I lived for a reason.
So they obviously were having to seek shelter during the bombardment.
We were always scared. Every time the siren went off, we were able -- the curtains would get shut. We would sit down and eat in the dark. Somehow my father always saw in the dark. If I went for the food --
In the dark.
In the dark, my father would hit me with the fork.
[Laughter]
In the dark.
In the dark. But he hit me all the time.
Your parents and your siblings had their French citizenship taken away from them.
They sure did.
But that didn't happen to you. Explain that so we can understand that. They lost their citizenship but you did not.
Because I was born in France. And my brothers were born in France. So we did not lose our citizenship. We were citizens and maintained the French citizenship.
But your mother, father, and sister --
Lost their citizenship.
What was the rationale for that?
Well, if you're naturalized, in other words, if you came in after 1940 to France, you became subject to become a foreign Jew and that way you became susceptible to be picked up by the Germans.
And the language of that day, considered today, considered stateless. You had no home country at that point.
That's right. And in 1942 they picked up the Jews.
So tell us about the summer of 1942. That's when your family left for Free France, Vichy France.

Yes. Actually we left June 16. We arrived in Southern France, the last stop before we got into Free France. Free is called --
Explain that for us. Explain what free France really meant.
It really meant that the Germans were not there yet. They got there in 1943 or late 1942.
The government controlling Free France was --
Very much French.
Collaborationists with the Nazis.
Yes.
Do you know why your family chose to go the direction it went?
Well, they couldn't get out. They couldn't get passports to get out from France because they were foreign Jews. So you couldn't get pass passports anymore. And, of course, America didn't accept people yet from France.
You told me that when the deportations began in Paris, when Jews, particularly as you described those that lost their citizenship, were deported, that there were Parisians who denounced Jews to get their apartments.
That's right. On top of that -- well, it just happens that this was the 71st anniversary of the roundup. It came up on July 17, two days ago. At that time -- I got a paper. I got to read it because my girlfriend is very strict.
[Laughter]
I hope I find it. Here it is.
This is the roundup at the Velodrome?
Yes. My father had the foresight to listen to rumors and we left Paris on June 16, 1942. Exactly one month before the roundup of foreign Jews by the French police. We boarded trains, as we did in 1940. This time the authorities refused to allow Jews to return to Paris. Our identification cards had a J on them, marking us as Jews. We went to Bride-les-Bains, which was in Vichy, France. Bride-les-Bains became popular in 1992 for the Olympic Games. It was used as the living quarters for the participants of the games.
On July 16 and 17 of 1942 --
A month after you left.
Yes, sir. Thousands of French police swooped down on Paris neighborhoods to arrest 13,152 immigrants and foreign Jews from Eastern Europe at the behest of the occupying German authorities as well as the orders of [Speaking Non-English Language]. Childless couples and unmarried adults were taken to existing internment camps in France. But others included 1,129 men, 2,916 women, and 4,115 children were taken to ill-equipped stadiums known as Velodrome, an indoor stadium where they held indoor bicycle racing events. They were held there for between four and six days with no water, no food, and the toilets were starting to overflow. After the roundup, nearly all 13,152 people arrested on July 16 and 17, had been handed over to the Germans and shipped to Auschwitz. Only 100 survived at the end of the war.
When the roundup happened on that day, as you described those couple of days, you had by then --
I missed it.
You missed it. So you ended up in this little town of Bride-les-Bains.
Yes.
Tell us why Bride-les-Bains, if you know -- I think your family had vacationed there. Right? At one point?

I think they had been there. I really don't remember. All I know is that when we got off on the train station, we met all the family at the station. We were all in the same car.
My significant other has a theory on that in saying that they probably planned it that way so that the children wouldn't denounce each other, which is probably true.
So how many of you ended up in that place before you went to Bride-les-Bains?
I would think that there were the four sisters that we saw in the introduction.
Your mother's sisters?
Yes.
And their families.
And their family. One -- you'll ask me that later.
All right. So now you're in Bride-les-Bains. A little town.
A little nothing.
Were you hiding there?
We were hiding in the open, I guess. My father made sure that we went to church on Sunday. I went to church regularly. I always wore my beret. And I sat in the pews. And the priest would come, take off my beret, put it on my lap. I didn't know anything about that. Didn't pay attention to it. But later in years when I went to Canada and met my brother, he told me that that priest was really a Jew and he knew who we were, so he made sure that my hat was off so that I would be taken --
In fact, that priest was a member, as I recall, of the underground, the resistance.
When you moved to Bride-les-Bains, obviously there's a family to support and feed. How did your parents -- how did they feed the family?
My father became a lumberjack. All his fingers looked like they were crushed by the lumber that came through his hand. You know when you stub your toe or you stub your fingers, your nails grow funny. Well, my father never needed a manicure.
You had told me --
And my mother was a seamstress.
So she started sewing.
She made money.
And your father, as you said to me, was not cut out to be a lumberjack.
No, he was not. He was protected --
Management protected him.
Yes, sir.
And your mother as -- was a seamstress so you were able to make ends meet there.
You were going to church, as you said. Did you pretend as a family that you were Catholic?
Well, I was the only one that went to church.
Ok. So here you are in a little town. There's a fair number of you. People knew you were outsiders. Did they ask questions? Did they probe? Did they want to know --
They didn't want to know that much because I spoke perfect French. I guess I went to school before I went to Bride-les-Bains. Things were normal life before the Germans came in.
Did you go to school in Bride-les-Bains?
I must have. My mother used to -- sleeve protectors. We used to use real ink in school and they leaked a lot and went on shirts.
That you remember.
You shared with me -- these were your words -- that Bride-les-Bains was a hotbed of

the French resistance. Tell us about them.
They used to come in once a month or so. They used to get drops from the French resistance in England, used to send planes, would drop food stuff. My brother used to come home with cans of beans or whatever that he would bring home to my parents. It was a big fiesta. When they came into town, they used to march down the road. My brother let me carry his rifle. I used to drag it because it was bigger than me. Everything was bigger than me.
Which brother was this?
Jean.
And he was a member of the resistance himself.
He sure was. He was a hero.
Absolutely.
You told me that you don't remember the Germans coming in and doing raids in Bride-les-Bains. Why do you think they didn't?
Because they were scared. Because they came into town, they would have got hurt. The underground would have taken care of it.
Why do you think they didn't try to crush the resistance there?
Well, it was very mountainous. We were right near the alps. The French were in the mountains.
Kind of guerrilla warfare.
Oh, yeah. And there was not a place that people that didn't belong there wanted to go.
Of course, you mentioned to me that there were people who did spy for the Germans. Why do you think you were not denounced? Here's this family of Jews living in this little town.
Well, we didn't really bother anybody. I mean, the French got to be sympathizers to what was going on. The French down in the little towns were not as prejudice as the French in the big towns. The French in the big towns were anti-Semitic.
And for the folks there --
And still are.
And for the folks in Bride-les-Bains, the enemy for them was the Germans.
Yes.
So that's why it was a hotbed of resistance there.
Do you know if your brother, Jean, did he ever fire his rifle?
Well, they tried to do that. My brother-in-law stopped them. My brother was in the same troops. There were Germans playing in the snow. Because the snow is near the Alps a lot. And they were playing on a swing. My brother stood up and wanted to shoot one of them, and my brother-in-law says sit down, don't move, I'll break your head. And he saved his life because he would have shot, probably would have missed them.
Despite the fact that the Germans were not coming in there much because of the resistance, you have memories, though, of some pretty scary incidents.
Well, yes. One of them was there was six trucks that parked right under the balcony that we saw on the slide, six big trucks, all Germans. And they parked right under us. I was playing on the balcony with a French friend. He saw us and we decided to go inside the house. And when we got inside the house, there was a big knock on the door. We knew there was a German came up to see us. And this German knocked on the door. My friend and I didn't want to open it but he started banging louder and louder. I said you better open up, this guy's going to break the door. So my friend opened the door, and I swear this German was as big as the doorjambs. He fit in the door. He probably had to walk sideways to come in. But when he came

in, he says [Speaking Non-English Language]. I understand Yiddish but my friend didn't understand German. Yiddish is similar to German.

At any rate, after a while he kept on saying [Speaking Non-English Language] and got on my nerves and I said -- I'm a little guy, and I say he wants a glass of water. And my friend got the glass of water. He gives it to him. And then he says [Speaking Non-English Language], which means you're a Jew. And I said, no. And my friend said, no, no, no, he's not Jewish. And then he left the house. Sweat pouring down my head. I knew for one reason or another that I was not supposed to be speaking to the Germans in the first place. And when he saw that I understood Yiddish -- or German, he knew I was Jewish. And he didn't pick me up.

Those same trucks happened to have been the one that picked up my aunt and uncle. And they never came back.

From Bride-les-Bains?

From Bride-les-Bains. They went to Auschwitz. I got papers in the museum that said that they disappeared in Auschwitz.

You shared with me that the locals, particularly the resistance, people in the resistance, really dealt harshly with those in the town that they thought were collaborators.

That was at the end of the war.

Ok. Maybe we'll come back to that a little later.

Your sister ended up marrying a fellow --

The guy that saved my brother.

When your sister married him, your parents were not happy about it.

Of course not. He was not Jewish. And that was against the rules. But unfortunately during the war my mother felt that it probably was best that she stayed married to him.

And it turned out he was also in the resistance, right?

Yes. He's the one that saved my brother.

Ok. Maybe we can come back to that later.

So you stayed in Bride-les-Bains from 1942, June 1942, to August 1944. And that's when your family moved back to Paris. What made it possible for you to go back to Paris and what was it like to be back in Paris?

Well, the Germans were leaving. They were retreating back to Germany. It was almost the end of the war and the Battle of the Bulge had passed over, and they were losing quite a bit of people. The Stalingrad also disseminated the Germans and they decided they were going to make the last stand in Germany. So we had an opening to go back. And my brother being in the resistance went back to do his fighting in Paris, but he didn't do much fighting because it was over.

The resistance played a pretty significant role in the liberation of Paris. Didn't they?

Yes. They chased the rest of them that were in the Paris area. There's a lot of bullet holes in buildings in Paris itself from the uprising.

Once Paris was liberated, is that when your parents felt you could go back to Paris?

Yes, sir. And that's when I saw the biggest parade in my life. On the shoulders of my father.

Tell us about that. This was a profound moment for you.

Well, they closed off the Champs Elysees. If you've ever been to Paris, that's the biggest Main Street in the world that I know of. They have 42 soldiers lined up, coming down the Champs Elysees. I was standing on my father's shoulder watching the parade.

And you said earlier today, you said that remains so vivid in your memory.

You go to Paris on the 25th of August, which happens to be my birthday, I'm driving my car

through Paris and I see all of these flags. I said, “How did they know I was coming?”
[Laughter]
It happened to be a celebration for the liberation of Paris.
Were you able to go back to your former home, where you actually lived?
I sure was. Actually, one of my nephews lived there with his wife. He got divorced but his wife still lives there.
To this day?
Yeah.
Although for you and your family, for Paris and the French, the war effectively ended in August 1944 but the war continued elsewhere until the surrender in May. What was your family's life like during that period? You're back in Paris.
Well, we were all -- well, food was very scarce. My father wrote to his sister in Brooklyn and he told her about the hardships that he was going through and she said, “Why don't you come over here, to the States?” And my father said "That sounds like a plan."
But he tried to get in there but he couldn't come because he was born in Romania. And the French quota was wide open because no French people were leaving to go to the United States. But we as French citizens got visas to come to the states right away.
Before we talk about you coming to the states, talk about that period before the war ended. You told me a -- really a truly funny story, I have to admit, about you would get food packages and you got a package of what you thought was soup.
Oh, yeah. My sister was taking English lessons in school. She took a package and said s-o-a-p on there. And my mother asked my sister what does that mean. And my sister read it and said that means soup.
[Laughter]
And my mother went out and bought this beautiful chicken on the black market. She put it in the pot, put the vegetables in the pot, and poured the package in, what she thought was soup, and put it on the stove and started boiling and all of a sudden suds came out of it.
[Laughter]
They got in panic and saw all of the suds. What happened is the soup was soap. We had the cleanest chicken but --
[Laughter]
The worst soup there was.
Did you start school at that point?
To learn English? No.
No, period. To learn math.
Yes.
And as you said, your parents began trying to figure out how they can emigrate and leave France.
Yes.
And the Romanian quota was a very small quota. Right?
That's correct. That was Eastern Europe. And Eastern Europe, even the United States was, if you will, antisemitic so that my parents couldn't come with us. But when we became citizens, my brother, Achilles, got drafted as soon as we got to New York. Actually a year after we got to New York. He got drafted into the Army. He didn't become a citizen. I became the citizen. But we brought my parents over. After five years they were able to come over.
They had been making efforts since the end of the war to try to get here.

Yes. My mother learned to become literate. My father already knew how to write and all of that stuff.
You recently read a book written in French by your cousin, Rachel. You learned a lot of details you didn't know.
Well, I really forgot a lot of what happened in Bride-les-Bains. I forgot a lot of my history until I read her -- she and her sister escaped during the war. She was working. And the Germans picked up her parents --
You told us about them a little while ago.
Yeah. They went out -- they sent out the youngest daughter to find the sister. And her employer, who happened to be in the underground, wouldn't let her leave and says you're not going back to your parents because they're not coming back anyway. You are staying right where you are. And that's how we saved them by not letting them go back to their parents.
And you learned many other details about that time from Rachel's book.
Yeah. And she went to a nunnery actually and was raised in a nunnery.
As you told us a few moments ago, your parents couldn't come till later but you and your sister was married, so she was in France.
Yes. She didn't come.
So you and your two brothers come to the United States in 1946. Tell us about coming to the United States. You're 9 years old, I believe.
Yeah. Well, first thing -- my cousins and friends -- I'm an oddity. Here I come from a foreign country. I must be from Mars. I could have been from Mars. I didn't speak English. They were trying to teach me how to write. When they showed me the alphabet, I showed them I knew the alphabet. They showed me numbers. I showed them I knew how to write numbers. They said, “You're smart.” That's what I learned in school.

At that time, also, my aunt wanted to feed me so she gave me an orange. I never saw an orange in my life. So I take the orange and I eat it like an apple.

[Laughter]

Peel and all. And they say, “What are you doing?” I said, “I'm eating the food.” Well, you're supposed to peel it first. Anyway, that's my first experience with oranges.
And in school, am I correct that --
I started with first grade.
You're 9 years old and they put you in the first grade.
Yes, sir. And I skipped grades.
I think you told me at one time you were in one semester in high school where you were taking four separate English classes.
Yeah, foreign English, because I was born in foreign country. And because I was speaking English with a Brooklyn accent, they decided that wasn't perfect English. Then I had to take literature. Then I had to take some other speech English.
Let's go back a little bit. Do you remember the trip across the Atlantic? You came by ship.
Yes. It took us six days on the ship. We stopped in the middle of the ocean because there was a strike of the longshoremen and we couldn't get off the ship. We waited. And the family came to see us at the ship. My uncle came up. I thought it was my father because he looked like my father. He's my father's brother. So they looked like twins. I said, “There's daddy.” He says, “No, that's your uncle.” Anyway.

As the food came up, it had to pass all the ports and all the food disappeared -- as they came up. By the time it came up to us, we had nothing in the basket.

When you left France, do you remember whether you thought your parents would be right behind you?
Yes, I did.
You thought the next ship maybe.
The next plane or whatever.
And four years later.
Yeah.
I want to ask you about something when you were on the ship. You were a little boy. You had some lead soldiers.
I was playing on the ship, playing with my lead soldiers that my father had bought with a lot of money. I'm playing with them and some young kids came over and took my soldiers and threw them overboard. That was a sad time.
Because it was the one thing --
It was my father's present.
When you got to New York, you and your siblings did not stay together.
No. One went to the Bronx and the other with me in New York. The one that went with me to New York found a job at the United Nations and worked there for 48 years.
And was the longest serving employee ever of the United Nations.
That's correct.
Your other brother ended up living in Canada.
Yeah, Wally. Ran away from the draft.
Oh, ok.
[Laughter]
He didn't want to go to the Army.
Whereas your other brother ended up being drafted.
Yeah.
Your parents arrived four years later, 1950. What was their adjustment like?
Well, my mother had difficulties. She had to learn a new language. Her linguistics were not that great. She spoke a lot of Yiddish. Well, people didn't look very highly at people that only spoke Yiddish.
So it was tough for her. How about your father?
My father adjusted as much as he could. He was still a presser, which was better than being a lumberjack.
In New York. Your parents -- when you were 19 years old, you joined the Air Force and you end up being stationed in Paris.
I did.
That seems really ironic. Tell us about that.
Well, I got there I guess you could say by accident. What happened is that -- I was in the service already. I got stationed in Wyoming. I saw this place that said locator. I says, well, that's nice. I'll go see if they know where a friend of mine is. He was a good friend of mine from Brooklyn. We grew up together, went to Shiva together. I said do you know where this guy is and he happened to have been right behind my barracks. So we met each other. It had been a while since we saw each other. We spent a lot of time together.

Then I saw -- I said, you know, I'm here; I know I'm going to go overseas; let me go see my commander. So I went to see my commander and I says I got a sister in Paris I would like to be able to go to Europe, anyplace in Europe, and see my sister. I also got my

grandmother there. And everybody in my class went to Okinawa except me. I went to Paris. So if I hadn't done that, I would have gone to Okinawa.
What was it like for you to return to Paris?
Oh, my sister was so happy to see me. Here I am in American uniform. My brother-in-law happened to become a Communist. [Laughter] And it didn't fit in right. But I wore my uniform.
How long did you stay in Paris?
Four years.
You saw your grandmother. Were there other family members who survived?
All my cousins were still there.
They all survived.
And the little girl that you saw in the picture was there. The little boy, the baby, actually died several years later. But I saw him when I was in Paris.
Of your large, extended family, do you know how many perished?
The only ones that I know -- well, one died during the war because he happened to be on the line. He got captured.
He was in the French Army?
In the French Army. He was shot up and lost both his legs. He died of gangrene because they didn't take care of him because when they took off his pants, they found out he was Jewish.
Have you been back to Bride-les-Bains?
Never. My brother-in-law, whose mother owned a hotel there, said don't even bother; you won't recognize it. Well, as I mentioned, that was the place where they had the Olympics. He said the whole thing is changed. You'd never recognize it anyway. I wouldn't recognize it anyhow.
I'm going to turn to our audience and see if they have any questions for you. But you told me that you are now the only remaining member of the family who is alive.
That's correct.
Will you say a little bit about that?
It's very lonely, that's for sure. I miss my brother. I miss my sister. What can I say? There's nothing else to say. We survived the war.
You became a serious stamp collector at one time. You had a pretty unique collection. Tell us about that.
I collected the entire collection of Israeli stamps.
From the founding of Israel. Right?
Yeah. And I had the United States stamps from the beginning of the United States.
Wow. Do you still have the collection?
No. I gave my stamp -- my Israeli stamps to my son, Manny. And my other stamps I sold off through Ebay.
[Laughter]
Ready for a couple of question? We have time for a couple of questions. We'll see if anybody has a question for you. We have two mics. We have a mic coming down either aisle. If you don't mind waiting until you get the mic. Try to make your question as brief as you can. I'll repeat it just to make sure we hear it correctly and everybody hears it and then Marcel will respond to it.
I saw two hands go up. There we go. Yes, sir?
Good morning. How was the communication when you were in Free France? Could you tell your family had gone to Auschwitz or whatever? Was there a way of knowing that or was it just word of mouth?

What kind of -- how did you communicate to learn what was happening to family members?
Oh, yeah. There's a place in this museum where you could actually put in a person's name and they will tell you the whole history of the people you are looking for. You give them the name and they'll tell you what happened to them. My uncle happened to have been on that list. And it says he was in Auschwitz.
But at the time you didn't know what happened to him.
No. I didn't know. On top of that, there was an uncle that went to the Spanish side. He went over the Pyrenees. He walked over and found a Jewish society or whatever. They had his name and history when he got to Spain.
And that was the first you learned about that, reading it here in the museum?
Yes.
We have a question right down here. Yes, sir?
Hello, sir. My question is, when where -- were you drafted at the time you came to the United States or you joined?
I volunteered. I volunteered.
Your brother was drafted.
My brother was drafted. My other brother was looked for.
[Laughter]
Thank you.

All right. Oh, one more question? Ok. One more question. And when we finish the program, Marcel will say a few words to close the program. He will remain behind. So if you have another question you want to ask, absolutely feel free to come up and do it at that time.

Yes, please.
Hi. How are you? I wanted to know, how was the ship ride on your way there? Was there, you know --
It was rough. It was a military ship. And we had bunks that swung.
Like hammocks?
Hammocks. And everybody was sick on the ship except me and my brother. And then they gave us the American bread. Which was famous --
Wonder Bread.
Wonder Bread. And it made me sick.
[Laughter]
And you started to say this, when there was the longshoremen strike, you had to stay on the ship for a couple of extra weeks in port. Right?
Marcel Hodak: Yes. And I didn't have to go through Ellis Island. But we had to go through the ports to get our baggage.
We're going to close the program in a moment. I want to thank all of you for being here with us. We'll have *First Person* programs each Wednesday and Thursday until August 10. The museum's website will have information about our program that will resume again in March 2018. So we hope that you can come back. We also post videos of the programs on the YouTube part of the museum's website. So you can see Marcel's and many others if you would like to do that.

It's our tradition at *First Person* that our First Person has the last word. So on that note I turn back to Marcel to close the program. And as I mentioned, when he's done, he will stay here on the stage. So if you want to come up and shake his hand, get your picture taken with him, or ask him a question, that's an opportunity to do so.

Marcel?

I would like to end by reading a letter from a woman in North Carolina who heard me speak at the Holocaust Museum.

“Dear Mr. Hodak, I want to thank you for being so brave in telling your story. I was only taught about the military part, not about the death camps or anything else and that was in 1987. I did not know until I seen ‘Schindler's List.’ We watched it as a family. My stepson asked if it really happened and his dad told him it did. As I sat there, I was so upset to see people treated so cruel. I wish I could have helped but that was before I was born.

I want to thank you also for serving our country and protecting us. I'm so sorry about your aunt and uncle.

Thank you for taking us down history's path and showing us what happened when a man tries to play God and teaching us so this won't happen again.

Sincerely."

Thank you.