

Blumenberg Ljudevit In Forced Labor



This is one of my most interesting photos. Not too many people have been photographed in their forced labor and lived to talk about it. This photo of me was taken in Sombor in 1941. The war began, and this is how my life looked at that time: In 1941, I was already living in Subotica and working with a colleague in his dental technician practice. After six months, they took me to forced labor. One day the Hungarian authorities called me to Sombor, where all the Jews my age from

Subotica were taken, to register for forced labor. We were put up in a school. In Sombor we worked at the airport. From there they took us to Prigrevica where we were put up in a stable. I must say it was bearable; they even let us go home during the winter. After that they moved us to a railroad unit at the most heavily used station in Budapest [Rakos rendezo] where we worked alongside the Hungarian soldiers. We dug up time bombs and were very lucky that none of them went off and no one was wounded. Since that station was used for army transport, they unexpectedly removed us and transferred us to the border close to Slovakia; I don't know exactly where. Suddenly, they took us somewhere near Szombathely, where there was a forest. Our task was to make a new track, which I think was used to hide locomotives during bombings. That's when the harsh Jewish tragedy began for me; it was then that I began to encounter horrible things. One day, they lined up our unit and took us to Szombathely. The first thing we saw was a school with an open gate. And what we saw there! Heaps of dead bodies were arranged like wood, one on top of the other, in a pile. The Hungarians forced us into a room. The first directive was to get naked. Once we were undressed they began to beat us. We had to hand over everything we had with us: money, jewelry, documents, pictures, prayer books. They literally ran over and killed anyone who fell over and couldn't get up. The Hungarians put us in a barrack where we cried for our dead friends who weren't strong enough to make it. The next day a malicious and repulsive officer handed us over to the Austrians.