

Eshye Galpert In Forced Labor Service



This is a picture of my father Eshye Galpert and fellow laborers during his forced labor service in a battalion under the Hungarian army. He is the second one on the right. The photo was taken somewhere in Transcarpathia in 1940. He sent it to us in Mukachevo. In 1938 the Germans occupied Czechoslovakia and gave the former Hungarian territory including Subcarpathia back to Hungarians. [Editor's note: The Germans only occupied the Czech lands, Slovakia became an independent state but that part of it, which was mostly populated by Hungarians, was in fact ceded to Hungary in accordance with the first Vienna Decision of 1938.] In the course of time it became clear that this was a fascist Hungary and the authorities began to introduce anti-Jewish laws. My father lost his trade license. My master also lost the license for his shop. In 1940 his shop was closed. My father and I had to look for a job. We went to work at Mr. Rot's stationery factory, which was still operating at the time. I became a mechanic and my father was hired as a worker. In early 1941 my father was recruited to Hungarian forced labor in Velikiy Berezhnyy district. The so-called Arpad line was under construction there. [The Arpad line was a military defense in the Eastern Carpathians, the construction of which was started in 1940.] This was a labor camp of a kind. Jews were not recruited to the Hungarian army, but they had to serve in work battalions constructing defense lines, barracks and doing other construction work at the front. They had no weapons and often perished during firing. My father worked in the forced labor until 1942 when he was released due to his age.