

Leon Solowiejczyk In The Polish Army



This is a photo of me and some friends from the Polish Army. I don't remember their names. The only thing I remember is the fact that the first man from left is called Wisniewski. The photo was taken in Lublin in 1944. I don't remember who took it. In 1944 I went to a petty officers' course in Zytomierz. It was still 1944. It was like an officers' school, but you didn't get an officer's rank. It was a six-week course. There they'd say, 'Although I can't write, I can't read, I can speak.' I later learned these courses were modeled after Pilsudski's 1st Division. I graduated from the course, but didn't receive an officer's rank. There was a political officer there, Michalak, he was from Cracow. I went to see him and told him I wasn't fit to be an officer, because of that leg and that accent. I never hid the fact that I was Jewish. Anyway, not with my accent. My name, Solowiejczyk, was well known there. Because of that uncle Abram, who used to sell horses. So I knew my place, I knew I'd finally get a disability pension anyway. Although I could have done whatever I wanted. I was held in high esteem. I was known for being able to arrange things that others weren't able to do. They later moved us to Lublin, to officers' training school. We were quartered in Majdanek. There we found corpses which were still warm. It was dangerous there. If a soldier didn't come back in the evening, we'd go looking for him. We'd find him in a ditch, undressed. The Ukrainians didn't care if you were Jewish or not, if they needed a uniform they'd undress you and kill you. I arrived in Lodz in 1945, in February.