

In The Army



This photograph was taken in Bandirma in 1941. This is when I was in the military. Our troop was the one next to the airport.

I am second from right, I know the others, but I do not remember their names. I only know Moiz, Moiz Kohen. In the front, first from left is Moiz Kohen.

He used to be an acquaintance. He had a typewriter repair shop in Yüksek kaldırım. He worked with his father.

We were together for 3 years in the military, then only a hello, we did not have much intimacy. What I want to tell more about the military. Military service was hard then, it wasn't like today. What I remember from those times, for example we were building a center, an airport center, and when we worked with the British, they even paid us daily. They paid something for the work. But later we went to other places.

I was a soldier when the Holocaust was taking place in Europe, from 1941-1944. and Anatolia was in the dark. The lights would be out in Kayseri, in Malatya (two cities in the central section of Turkey called Anatolia), there was no electricity at night. We were 550 non-Muslims in the military, Greeks, Armenians and Jews, ten corporal sergeants and one officer. They gave us blue uniforms for the airport, then an order came, they removed the Armenians, they gave them brown uniforms, to build roads. We went from town to town and were discharged from Çanakkale.

We were soldiers when the Wealth Tax was implemented during wartime. They did not impose it on me but they did to my older brother, the one who married Mayer. We even went to the mayor, my older brother asked for time, he said let me finish my military service and then pay. They did not accept it. He had a big apartment in Beyoğlu, on Sürterazi sokagi (street), Mayer Apartement. At the time it was registered for 350,000 in the registrar's office. They sold it with foreclosure for 110,000. A wealth tax of 256,000 liras came. And they said, thank your lucky stars that you are a soldier, otherwise you were going to go to the military. That is how he was saved.

Also about the 20 military classes, at the time they took the men into the military, there were no young men left. The women had to go out to the streets and sell lemons and such in Kuledibi, in Sishane, because there were no men. I went as a bakaya (new conscript who, because they were not present at their first muster, are charged with desertion) to the 20 military classes because I

did not go when I should have. I did 3 years of military service. But I was comfortable. I was giving German lessons to the officer who I was an orderly for. Later my older brother came. He came for the third time. He stayed for 7 months because he was old.