



## Alexander White, M.D.

Born Alexander Bialywlos in 1923, Alex White grew up in the town of Krosno, Poland with his parents and three siblings. Both his secular and religious schooling ended abruptly on September 1, 1939 when Nazis invaded Poland and occupied Krosno.

As German dive-bombers strafed roads clogged with retreating Polish soldiers, terrified refugees clutched their few, hastily grabbed possessions. Alex's family found temporary refuge in Dynow, a crossroads city, but the SS took all Jewish males between 16 and 60 and shot them in a forested ravine. His father was spared at this time because he had returned to Krosno to rescue some family possessions; Alex's mother when asked by an armed SS man how old he was, bravely answered 14, thus sparing Alex's life.

In the Krosno ghetto, Alex and his family endured two years of forced labor, starvation, poverty, curfews, and shootings. On December 3, 1942, the order for liquidation and "resettlement" of those of us in the ghetto was issued by the Gestapo. There were dead bodies lying on the cobbled ground and latecomers entering the ghetto were summarily shot on the spot. There were 24 Jews that were assigned to the airbase to work for the Luftwaffe in an enclosed and guarded Labor camp. The remainder of his family including cousins, aunts, uncles and his brother were killed.

In May 1944, his father was sent to the gas chamber, leaving Alex the sole survivor of his immediate family.

As Soviets approached, the Nazis tried to hide evidence of their atrocities. Alex was ordered to open the mass graves in Krakow-Plaszow Camp and burn the corpses. Next, he was taken to Gross Rosen, the most brutal of the camps he experienced. Then he worked in a munitions factory, protected by Oskar Schindler, until he was liberated on May 8, 1945. Alex was number 269 on Schindler's List which was made famous by the Steven Spielberg film, Schindler's List.

After the war, Alex hitchhiked to Krakow, where he discovered that the returning Jews—who had survived the Hitler era—were being killed by Poles. In Krosno, Alex found an uncle survivor who came from the American zone with a rucksack filled with chocolate, coffee, and cigarettes. Using these luxuries, the two bribed their way back to the American zone, where Jewish refugees were able to find help.

Aided by several Jewish organizations, Alex studied medicine in Munich and came to the United States in 1950 where he continued his medical training. In Chicago, Alex met his wife, Inez, and he joined the U.S. Army serving during the Korean War.

Now a retired internist, Dr. White has two daughters and a son and lives in Arizona. He frequently speaks about his experiences

during the Holocaust to students, teaching them not to be indifferent, to get an education, and to be a mensch (Yiddish word for a person of integrity and honor). Dr. White has devoted his life to fulfilling his father's last wish. His father asked him to promise that should Alex survive that he would be a mensch.