

# SIGMUND S.

Sigmund was born on May 11, 1923, in Toruń, Poland, to a Roman Catholic family. His father was a career soldier, but was forced to resign after the 1926 coup d'état. Sigmund was educated in a highly exclusive cadet school for sons of Polish army officers and served as an altar boy at church. In 1940, fearing an uprising, the SS arrested leading members of the Polish intelligentsia. They came for his father but since he was not home, they took Sigmund in his place.

Sigmund spent four weeks in prison at Tarnow before being transferred to Auschwitz. He arrived on June 14, 1940, on the first transport of prisoners. His number was 88 and he would become one of the longest surviving inmates at Auschwitz. Prisoners lived in a former warehouse until the construction of Blocks 1, 2, and 3 was completed.

For the first few weeks, they were made to run instead of work.

As more transports of prisoners arrived at the Camp, Sigmund was forced to help build and expand the Camp. He volunteered as a cabinetmaker for the first two years and made skis for the SS men to use on vacation, as well as furniture and then doors for crematoria. Sigmund joined the Auschwitz fire brigade in October 1942, which allowed him increased freedom and movement within the Camp. His number, 88, gained him respect among other prisoners because it indicated the duration he had spent in the Camp and his lengthy survival.

On November 12, 1944, the Auschwitz fire brigade was exchanged with the brigade from Sachsenhausen, Germany, where Sigmund was liberated by American troops on May 3, 1945. Out of fear of being sent to one of Stalin's prisons or labour camps, he did not return to Poland. Instead, he moved to Nova Scotia in 1949, but ultimately settled in Alberta with his wife and sons, where he owned and operated a hotel in Fort Macleod. Dedicated to sharing his experiences, Sigmund became a member of the International Advisory Committee on the Future of Auschwitz.

He was also the subject of the documentary film, *Prisoner 88*.

SEE THE TESTIMONY RECORD OF [SIGMUND S., 1992](#) IN THE VHEC'S COLLECTIONS FOR RELATED HOLDINGS AND FOR INTERVIEW DETAILS.