YOUNGEST SCHINDLER’S LIST SURVIVOR

BY [ORENU](http://orenu.co.il/en/?author=5) · APRIL 24, 2014

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**Before moving to Israel and establishing a family, Eva Levi, 75, lived a very different reality. She is the youngest person alive who lived through the horror of the Holocaust thanks to the famous Oscar Schindler. Today, a few days before Holocaust Memorial day, she tells her story.**

*Eva and her granddaughter*

Hello, my name is Eva Lavi. I was born in Krakow, Poland and when I was two-years-old, WWII broke out. When the war was over, I was 8 years-old. During the war I was deported from a ghetto to Auschwitz and then to Czechoslovakia. I am alive today and can tell you my story thanks to two people: Oscar Schindler and my mother. Today I am married and live in Israel. I have two children and three grandchildren. (She laughs) They are a bit lazy! My first granddaughter, Anne, is currently in the Israeli army. Because of this, I am telling my story to the IDF.

**A Lost Childhood**

When the war started, I was such a little girl that I didn’t understand what was happening. I didn’t have a childhood at all; I didn’t have grandfathers or grandmothers, nor did I go to kindergarten or school.

However, though this was a terrible time in my life, I had two great fortuitous things: I was lucky to have my name inscribed on Oscar Schindler’s list, of which I was the youngest person, and I was able to stay by my mother’s side.

*Oscar Schindler*

We were first sent to the Krakow Ghetto. From this ghetto, they took us to labor camps near Krakow and this is how I got put on Schindler’s List. They then wanted to take us to Czechoslovakia but after an accident, we were transferred to Auschwitz. We stayed in the death camp for three weeks, and lived in horrendous conditions. The fear of dying was always present and renewed every time we went near the crematoria.

**A story of uncertainty and insanity**

A particular moment stands out specifically during my time living in this hell. One day, while all the women were together in a dark building, a female Nazi officer approached my mother and told her that I was to be taken away. My mother began to cry and scream. She wouldn’t let me go. But in Auschwitz it was impossible to refuse. My mother asked her where I was being taken and the officer promised I would be going to a good place. My mother did not understand. A good place? At Auschwitz? How could that be possible? But the officer again swore to my mother that I would be taken to a good place. And indeed, they took me to a very different place inside Auschwitz.

*Entrance to Auschwitz*

Nobody could believe it. The place was modern and clean, a rarity at Auschwitz where everything was dirty and black. At this new place there were only well-dressed children who almost looked good. I did not understand at all where I was. I felt that I may be in paradise. There were drawings on the walls, toys, clothes. The children were obviously sad because they were alone and without parents. It was 1944 and hunger was widespread, but in this place no one starved.

One day, the Nazis called us to come to dinner. The previous days we hardly ate. A slice of bread here, a potato there. That evening, they served us dinner and we ate so much. The next morning, once again, we had a real breakfast! The Nazis were so attentive that we thought that perhaps the war was over. For lunch, we were surprised as a table was prepared and we were dressed up.

We sat as three or four smiling kind men in civilian clothes entered. Each of the men sat alongside a child. I can still remember the smell of the potatoes they served for lunch. But we ate so much the day before that I could barely stomach anything. I was not hungry at all and I began to weep. The civilian who sat next to me asked, “What is the matter dear? Are you not hungry?” And I responded that no, I was not hungry. These men were actually from the Red Cross. All of the clothes, the food, the entire place was a false display of what was happening at Auschwitz. Crematoria? They weren’t seen. Lovely, well-dressed children who felt well and weren’t hungry, that is what the Red Cross Inspectors saw.

**Schindler’s List Saves My Life**

One day, all the people on Schindler’s list were collected. A Nazi officer began to read the names and when he called me and saw that I was just a little girl, he turned to Schindler and shouted: “Are you crazy! Does she look like a weapons professional? She’s just a girl!” Oscar replied that it was not a problem: he had taught me to handle a very specific job that only my fingers could accomplish on the weapons. This scene also appears in the movie “Schindler’s List.” So we managed to be transferred Czechoslovakia. There, it was different and easier because Schindler was responsible for us and not the Germans.

It is from this camp in Czechoslovakia that we were released. On the day of liberation, Schindler was not there and we didn’t know what was going to happen. Suddenly, we saw a Russian soldier on horseback at the gate. As I was the smallest, people gave me flowers and I ran to the soldier. When he saw me, he put me on his horse and we returned together into camp.

**From Auschwitz to Israel**

In the 50s, my family made Aliyah (immigrated) to Israel. I went to live in a kibbutz, which was really wonderful. I started going to school, eventually took the matriculation exam and then went to the army. I served in the Air Force. In my family, the Air Force is in our veins. It is there that I met my husband. My son also joined the joined the Israel Defense Forces.

Having experienced the horror of the camps, of Auschwitz, all the death and fear, I am always moved when I see our army, our soldiers and our flag. I truly love the IDF with all my heart. Today, Anne, my eldest granddaughter is in the army. I am so proud of her and so happy. The IDF is one of the things I hold most dear. I have two other grandchildren, sons, and I am sure they too will do their military service. I am so proud of them–it fills me with joy.

(To commemorate Holocaust Memorial day on April 28th, the IDF new media team has started the #WeAreHere campaign to honor the survivors. Read [here](http://www.idfblog.com/2014/04/22/commemorate-holocaust-memorial-day-idf-internet/) for more. Or watch the following video:)

<http://orenu.co.il/en/?p=675>