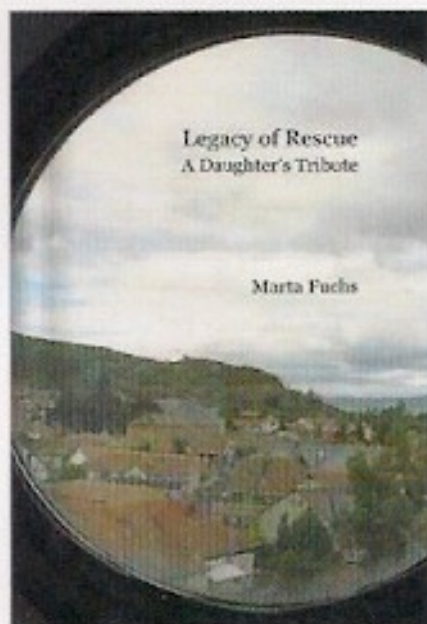


Accidental Hero

"I was volunteering at the Holocaust Library and Research Center of San Francisco when a young man came in who was making a documentary about Holocaust survivors and their children," Marta said. "I volunteered our family for the project. I thought this would be a great opportunity for us to talk about this together."

As the family started talking and gathering information and memories, Morton kept mentioning a Hungarian man who became the commanding officer of the labor camp: how he was a Seventh-day Adventist who refused to carry a gun; how he made sure they were able to worship and observe Jewish holy days — even fasting with them on Yom Kippur; how he managed to procure extra food rations for them; how he defied Nazi orders to have the prisoners in the camp exterminated when it became clear that Germany was losing the war and there was no more need for the workers.

"I was like, 'Dad! How come I never heard about this?'" Marta said. "He was so embarrassed. He had never talked about this man because he could not remember the Hungarian commander's name. I told him that was understandable — so much time had passed, and there were so many things that you tried to forget."



"Legacy of Rescue: A Daughter's Tribute" is the story of the heroic Seventh-day Adventist commander who saved the lives of 100 Nazi work-camp prisoners — including the father of author Marta Fuchs — during the dark days of the World War II Holocaust. (Courtesy Marta Fuchs)

"But my father just shook his head sadly," she continued. "No," he said, "it is unforgivable."

Drawing from her research skills acquired through years of academic training and experience as a librarian, and using a photograph that had been sent to her father by one of his fellow prisoners at the labor camp, Marta was able to learn that the commanding officer's name was Zoltán Kubinyi, a man who came to her father's labor camp quite literally by accident.

"The men had been locked up by their previous commanding officer, who headed off to headquarters to get the final authorization for decimation," she said. "He was traveling in a horse-drawn carriage, and a car came along and spooked the horse and the commanding officer ended up in a ditch with a broken leg. They sent a new officer to take the place of the injured officer, and the request for authorization was never submitted."