



# Department of Justice

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THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2001  
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CRM  
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## CATSKILLS MAN STRIPPED OF U.S. CITIZENSHIP FOR SERVICE AS NAZI CAMP GUARD

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Department of Justice announced today that a Federal judge in Syracuse, New York has entered an order revoking the naturalized U.S. citizenship of an Ellenville, New York, resident on the basis of his participation in acts of persecution committed against Jewish civilians during World War II as an armed guard at two SS slave-labor camps in Nazi-occupied Poland.

The denaturalization decision issued by U.S. District Judge Norman A. Mordue on July 13, 2001, released today, cited "extensive and undisputed documentary evidence" proving that Mykola Wasylyk, 77 -- who has homes in both Ellenville and in North Port, Florida, and owns and operates rental bungalows in Ellenville -- served in May 1943 as an armed perimeter guard at the SS Labor Camp Trawniki, a slave-labor camp for Jews in Nazi-occupied Poland. The Court found that Wasylyk was transferred later that summer to serve as an armed guard at the nearby SS Labor Camp Budzyn, a slave-labor camp located near the Polish town of Krasnik, where he stood guard in a watchtower. The Court noted that over a thousand Jewish men, women, and children were incarcerated under inhumane conditions at those two camps and forced to work as slave laborers during the period of Wasylyk's service. Many died in these camps from starvation, disease, shooting, and hanging; prisoners who were no longer able to work were routinely shot or shipped to killing centers elsewhere. The Court stated, "it is clear without question that [Wasylyk] admits having assumed guard duty" at the Trawniki and Budzyn camps,

and concluded, "it is obvious that the presence of armed, uniformed guards served to oppress the inmates as well as to deter any attempts to escape, resist or obtain help."

Assistant Attorney General Michael Chertoff, head of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, stated, "This decision should serve notice on others in this country who, like Wasylyk, played a role in these abominable crimes, that the Department of Justice will continue to identify, investigate, and take legal action against them." Eli M. Rosenbaum, Director of the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations (OSI), which, along with the U.S. Attorney's Office in Albany brought the case against Wasylyk, called the decision "an important victory on behalf of the thousands of innocents who suffered and died at the Trawniki and Budzyn camps while Mykola Wasylyk and his cohorts helped accomplish the Nazis' genocidal ambitions."

Wasylyk was born in 1923 in what is now Ukraine. He entered the United States in 1949 from Germany under the Displaced Persons Act of 1948. Wasylyk did not disclose his SS camp guard service on behalf of the Nazis and falsely told U.S. immigration officials that he had worked during the war in a paper firm in Dresden, Germany. He was naturalized in 1955. Judge Mordue stated in his ruling that "for approximately fifty years [Wasylyk] has enjoyed the benefits and privileges of a United States citizenship to which he was not legally entitled."

The proceedings to denaturalize Wasylyk were a result of OSI's ongoing efforts to identify, investigate, and take legal action against former participants in Nazi persecution who reside in the United States. He is the 65th Nazi persecutor to have been stripped of U.S. citizenship since OSI began operations in 1979. OSI has succeeded in removing 54 such persons from the United States to date. Nearly 250 individuals are currently under investigation by OSI, according to Rosenbaum.