



Department of Justice

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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT FILES SUIT TO REVOKE CITIZENSHIP OF
FORMER NAZI COLLABORATOR

WASHINGTON, D.C.--The Department of Justice announced today that a Chicago man who served in an infamous SS unit in Poland that took part in the Nazi program to annihilate the Jews has permanently departed from the United States.

The Department said Wasyl Lytwyn, 73, a retired shipping clerk, left the U.S. after signing an agreement on September 14, 1995 with the Criminal Division's Office of Special Investigations (OSI). In accordance with that agreement, OSI and the U.S. Attorney's Office in Chicago filed today a Complaint in U.S. District Court seeking Lytwyn's denaturalization. This will be followed by the filing of a Joint Motion for Consent Judgment based on Lytwyn's admissions and concessions in the settlement agreement.

In the agreement, Lytwyn assents to the entry of a court order of denaturalization and admits that his U.S. citizenship was illegally procured in that he concealed and wilfully misrepresented material facts and gave false testimony in order to obtain citizenship. The defendant further admits that he

served in the guard units of the Trawniki SS training and base camp and its successor unit, the SS Streibel Battalion, from February 1943 until at least April 1945, during which time that unit seized tens of thousands of Polish civilians who were forced to work as slave laborers while under guard by the SS Streibel Battalion.

The complaint filed today against Lytwyn alleges that he took part in a notorious Nazi operation against Jewish civilians while serving with the SS in Nazi-occupied Poland during World War II, namely the brutal Nazi liquidation of the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw, Poland, in April-May 1943. Lytwyn does not contest these allegations. Lytwyn admits that his unit later seized Polish civilians to serve as slave laborers and supervised them as they worked building fortifications in central Poland, as the complaint states. Lytwyn concedes that he concealed his Nazi activities in obtaining U.S. citizenship.

Lytwyn served the Nazis first in the guard detachments of the SS and Police Leader in Lublin, based at the SS training and base camp at Trawniki, Poland, and later as a member of the so-called Streibel Battalion, the complaint states.

For approximately nine weeks in 1943, Lytwyn trained at the Trawniki camp, an SS facility that trained guards and auxiliary police to assist in carrying out various tasks for the Nazi occupation authorities, including the annihilation of the Jews of Europe, the complaint alleges.

(MORE)

The complaint charges that Lytwyn participated in the Nazis' liquidation of the Warsaw Jewish ghetto in April-May 1943 and the violent suppression of the uprising launched by the Jewish resistance in defiance of that operation. Of the approximately 60,000 Jews in the ghetto when the operation began, 12-13,000 died during the uprising, 6,929 were sent to the Treblinka Death Camp and, except for the few Jews who escaped, the remainder were shipped to other Nazi camps in Poland.

The destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto, one of the most infamous of all Nazi atrocities, was completed by setting the ghetto afire in order to bring Jewish resistance to an end. The Germans estimated that 5-6,000 Jews perished in these fires. The leader of the operation, SS-Brigadefuehrer (Brigadier General) Juergen Stroop, titled his final report on the operation "The Jewish Residential Quarter in Warsaw is No More!" The report was used as a prosecution exhibit at the Nuremberg Trials.

Between August 1944 and January 1945, the Streibel Battalion seized tens of thousands of Polish civilians and supervised them while they toiled as slave laborers constructing fortifications at sites in central Poland, the complaint states.

The complaint alleges that Lytwyn's service with the SS--an organization adjudged criminal in 1946 by the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, Germany--constituted assistance in the Nazi program of persecution based on race, religion and national origin.

(MORE)

Key evidence to substantiate the allegations in the complaint consists of captured Nazi documents housed in Russian and Czech archives and made available to the United States in connection with this case.

According to the complaint, Lytwyn immigrated to Canada in 1948 and obtained Canadian citizenship in 1955. In 1957, he immigrated to the United States and in 1993 applied for naturalization as a United States citizen. Lytwyn became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1994.

OSI Director Eli M. Rosenbaum said that the so-called Trawniki men "played an instrumental role in the Nazi program of mass persecution," adding, "The Trawniki men rounded up and murdered Jews throughout Nazi-occupied Poland and brutally enslaved thousands of non-Jewish Poles." He said the initiation of proceedings to denaturalize Lytwyn was a product of OSI's ongoing efforts to identify and take legal action against former participants in Nazi persecution who reside in the United States. To date, 52 Nazi persecutors have been stripped of U.S. citizenship as a result of OSI's investigations and prosecutions, and 44 have been removed from the United States. More than 300 persons remain under investigation.

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