

## **Rabbi to Share Father's Holocaust Story**

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WINCHESTER — Ernst Grumbacher was arrested by the Gestapo and thrown in the Dachau Concentration Camp on Nov. 9, 1938, during Kristalnacht, also known as “The Night of Shattered Glass.”

The attack on Jewish families during this violent event led to the arrest of about 30,000 Jewish men in Germany who were sent to Nazi concentration camps during the Holocaust.

The word Kristalnacht refers to the windows of synagogues and Jewish-owned buildings that were smashed, leaving broken glass on the streets.

“He spent six weeks [in the camp] and got out miraculously,” said Ernst’s son, Rabbi Peter Grumbacher, who is serving as a part-time interim rabbi at Beth El Congregation in Winchester.

Grumbacher will share his father’s story, and how he was able to leave Dachau, during Community Outreach Sabbath. The event will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Friday at Beth El Congregation, located at 520 Fairmont Ave.

Community Outreach Sabbath is open to people of all faiths who wish to experience a Jewish Shabbat service.

Grumbacher’s presentation “Sharing the Silence: A Survivor’s Son Tells His Father’s Story” will take place following the Shabbat service on Friday. The event also falls before Yom HaShoah — Holocaust Remembrance Day, which begins Sunday and runs through the following Monday.

After Ernst left the concentration camp, he and his wife, Else, came to the United States on Jan. 1, 1939. He became a U.S. citizen and enlisted in the Army.

Grumbacher said many Jewish men who fought in World War II wanted to serve in Japan, as they did not want to return to Germany.

“But my father said, ‘I’m going back,’” Grumbacher said.

A wall in the family den was dedicated to the commendations his father received during his time of service.

With all he went through, Ernst didn’t lose his faith. “My father had a philosophy,” Grumbacher said. “He said, ‘God had nothing to do with this.’”

Ernst’s time in Dachau and World War II was something he didn’t like to speak about. It took a lot of probing from Grumbacher in his father’s later years to find out as much as

possible. He also found information through research and old documents belonging to his father.

“He really didn’t say anything,” Grumbacher said. “I asked him questions about things I found out, but he was still really, really terse.”

Ernst died in 1999, four years after Else.

Grumbacher started presenting “Sharing the Silence” in 2003, when he traveled more than 10,000 miles across the country to synagogues, colleges and businesses to share the story of a Holocaust survivor. He said he never turned down an opportunity to give his presentation.

“My feeling was if I don’t [share his story], as a child of a survivor, who will?” he said. With each day, the memory of the millions of lives lost during the Holocaust becomes more distant and easier to deny, Grumbacher said. Even if it only happened to one person, the story is important.

“I want to keep his legacy and heroism alive.”

[http://www.winchesterstar.com/lifestyles/features/rabbi-to-share-father-s-holocaust-story/article\\_33284007-eedb-5273-a9de-777339f959ac.html](http://www.winchesterstar.com/lifestyles/features/rabbi-to-share-father-s-holocaust-story/article_33284007-eedb-5273-a9de-777339f959ac.html)