

Days of Remembrance

11th ADA Bde. sponsors Holocaust observance

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11th ADA Bde. Public Affairs

The 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade sponsored this year's Days of Remembrance observance at Soldier Hall April 19. The theme for this year's observance was "Children in Crisis: Voices from the Holocaust."

The guest speaker for this year's observance was Tibor Schaechner, a Holocaust survivor. Schaechner was born in Budapest, Hungary in 1928. In March, 1944, his father was taken from his family and never seen again. Schaechner worked in several labor brigades until he escaped when he was 16.

"The refinery sent two trucks to pick up the boys to go to work," said Schaechner. "One morning I overslept and missed the truck so I took the city bus to go to the refinery. Earlier that day, 179 boys were taken off the trucks by the Hungarian State Police and turned over to the German authorities, none of the boys survived."

Until the liberation by the Russian Army in 1945, Schaechner lived in hiding with his mother and sister. Schaechner's sister was killed by a German anti-aircraft missile just days before the liberation.

"We do this to remember the victims of unjust prejudice and bigotry," said Staff Sgt. Harris, 286th Signal Co. "Over six million Jews and 5 million others perished during the Holocaust and it is estimated that over 1.5 million of those lives were children."

"All Jews were targeted for death, but children were among the most vulnerable," Harris said. "The very young, like the very old were often the first victims in the Nazi controlled ghettos. Most of these hidden children survived the Holocaust because they were protected by people and institutions of other faiths."

During the observance there was a candle lighting ceremony led by Leslie Novick, executive director of the El Paso Holocaust Museum and Study Center. Novick read a poem listing each of the death camps where victims of the Holocaust died. After each death camp was named, a candle was lit on behalf of all of the victims of each camp. Olga Bowman, a local Holocaust survivor, lit the last candle on behalf of all of the El Paso Holocaust survivors.

The brigade's partners in education; Logan Elementary School, Burnet Elementary School, Paso Del Norte Elementary School and Burges High School, participated in the activities as well. Students made displays for the observance and competed against each other to see who best symbolized the 1.5 million children who lost their lives during the Holocaust.

"We have a responsibility to remember and we have a responsibility to share this perspective with future generations, our youth," said Col. Forrest Smith, 11th ADA Bde. commander. "This year we engaged our partners in education in an educational competition to take this year's theme and attempt to put into perspective, the number 1.5 million."



PHOTOS BY SPC. JESSIKA MALOTT

Maj. Dave McNutt, 11th Air Defense Artillery deputy commanding officer, and Sgt. 1st Class Tammy Coleman, equal opportunity adviser, judge the displays at the Partners in Education schools April 13.

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Staff Sgt. Harris
286th Signal Co.



Col. Forrest Smith, 11th ADA Bde. commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Henry Hurd, 11th ADA Bde. command sergeant major, met with the El Paso Survivors Group, prior to the observance, to hear their stories April 11.



Col. Forrest Smith invited the El Paso Holocaust survivors to a luncheon before Thursday's ceremony.



Cantor Marc Philippe prayed during the observance Thursday.



Logan Elementary School children finished working on their mural April 12.



Trevor McGriff, a 4th grader at Burnet Elementary, helps finish the mural that his school entered in the competition.