

## Regina Zielinski

## Visual History Biographical Profile

Regina Zielinski was born Regina Feldman on September 2, 1925, in Siedliszcze, [Poland](#), to Josef and Golda Feldman. She had three brothers: Max, Paul, and Teodor, and one sister, Friedl. Her father owned a building materials business with which her mother and eldest brother, Max, helped. Regina went to a public school that was integrated with children of many religions.

In 1939, when the [Germans](#) invaded Poland, life began to change and Regina was no longer allowed to go to school. Instead, she and her family performed [forced labor](#), mainly building roads. In May 1941, they had to move into the Siedliszcze [ghetto](#). There, they were forced to dig ditches. Regina's brother, Max, later had a heart attack and died in the fall of 1942.

In December 1942, Regina and the rest of her family were [deported](#) to [Sobibor](#). Her parents, brothers, and sister were selected to go to the [gas chambers](#). Regina managed to escape [selection](#) when an officer asked if anyone knew how to knit and Regina's mother pushed her forward as a volunteer. Regina and eleven other girls were then taken to a barrack where they unraveled garments and knit them into socks throughout the winter for German soldiers. In early fall 1943, talk of an escape attempt secretly circulated among the prisoners. Regina heard about it and on October 14, she participated in the [Sobibor Uprising](#) and escaped from the camp along with hundreds of others. As she ran into the woods nearby,

she noticed there were only a few people left with her; many had been killed in their attempt to escape. Regina then obtained false identity papers which allowed her to go to Germany as a volunteer worker. In November, she arrived in Frankfurt where she found a job working for a German family looking after their son. While living in Frankfurt, Regina met her future husband, Josef "Kaz" Zielinski.



In April 1945, Regina remembered watching as the [United States Army](#) entered [Frankfurt](#). No longer needing to maintain her false identity, she left the German family with whom she had spent the previous two years and went with Kaz to a [displaced persons' camp](#) in Wetzlar, Germany. The couple was married on December 24, 1945. They had their first child, Andrew, in Germany, in 1947. Then, in 1949, the three immigrated to Sydney, Australia, where Regina worked as a seamstress. In 1958, Regina and Kaz had their second child, Marie.

In 1983, Regina was called by the German consulate in Australia to testify about her experiences in Sobibor. She then went to Germany to testify at a war crimes trial against Karl Frenzel, an [SS](#) guard who had been stationed at Sobibor when Regina was there. She testified she had seen him participate in the killings that happened in the camp, mainly in the gas chambers. At the time of Regina's interview in 1995, she was a widow and had one grandson.