

## REGINE BLUMEN

After hiding in different places in France, Régine Blumen was arrested and sent to Drancy, Auschwitz, and on a death march, ending up in Ravensbrück concentration camp.

*“Of the fifteen hundred people in the convoy from Drancy to Auschwitz only three women are alive today.”*

Régine Blumen (née Goldberg) was born on September 3, 1920, in Magdeburg, Germany. She, her older sister, and their parents fled Germany in 1933. They arrived in Paris without any knowledge of French, with only one suitcase each, and lived in a single room. There she married a Rumanian student Maurice Blumen, and their daughter Sophie was born in 1941. Maurice volunteered for the French army and was taken prisoner. In 1942, when the roundups of Jews began, Regine hid by moving from place to place in France. As a wife of a prisoner, she was theoretically safe and went to Paris looking for food. However, in 1944, she was arrested by the French police during one of the many roundups of Jews. She was sent to Drancy and deported to Auschwitz where she arrived after three days cramped in a cattle car with women, children, and old people. At Auschwitz, Régine was assigned to hard labor outdoors. Each day there was a selection where those judged unusable were sent to the gas chambers. Régine entered a block designated to work in a munitions factory where, despite the infernal noise, she was sheltered from the freezing weather.

Régine’s group left Auschwitz, marching barefoot, on January 18, 1945, under the blows and insults of the SS guards, who were fleeing in advance of the Red Army. At the end of three days they were crammed into freight cars. They wandered in this way for eight days from station to station, with the SS trying to get them placed in already full camps. Finally, they arrived at Ravensbrück and then went to Neustadt where they were locked in a barn while waiting for a place in the camp. Covered with lice, the prisoners were filthy, hungry, and emotionally destroyed.

Régine and the others were liberated by the Russian advance and were able to reach the American lines. Returning to Paris emaciated and unrecognizable, Regine found her daughter, her parents, and finally her husband, who had returned from captivity Their son was born in 1947. Now a widow, Régine lives in Paris surrounded by her children and grandchildren.