

TERESA SOSNOWSKA

Class 6a

My experiences of the world war starting from 1 September 1939 to today, that is 8 June 1946

We were living on the other side of the Bug river, in Sokal, when the war between Poland and Germany broke out. When the war started, so did the bombing raids. Crowds of people on the run swept from west to east and they told us that the Germans were taking the men as they advanced. So dad took us into the country and went east himself, following the others, thinking that he would join the Polish ranks that were to be formed.

After a stay of a few weeks in the country, we returned to the town which had been taken by the Soviets. Mum saw what was happening and she was very worried about dad. She went out very distressed, and when she was gone our long-awaited dad came back. His feet were swollen and he was tired and appalled. Mum also came back soon after. After a long and heartfelt welcome, dad started to tell us about what he had been through and it filled us with dread.

After a few days of rest, dad changed his job and went to report to his place of work, but they were stingy in paying him. So we were poor at home, we only had pancakes made from grit and black coffee with sweetener.

When the wintertime came they started to move people to Siberia. We were ready to go too, sleeping in our day clothes and listening for the smallest suspect sounds. A year of that unease went by.

The next year, however, brought a new war between the Soviets and the Germans. It broke out on 22 June 1941. The first projectile from over the Bug river came down at 2 a.m., and that was the start of the war. We woke up and hid in the hallway. Since the door was ajar, we saw the neighboring houses and the trees in our garden burning. And we heard a terrifying banging and noise. That commotion lasted for an hour. After the first fire had passed, we scurried into the basement. When the front line was behind us and the Germans had taken the city, we were still poor even though dad was working.

One time dad went into the country and he came back quite late and so angry that he couldn't get a word out. He cooled down after a while and told us how the Ukrainians had taken him to a basement when, luckily, a German arrived. Having found that whatever they suspected of dad was untrue and impossible, he smacked the Ukrainian in the mouth and let dad go.

After some time, we went to Kamionka Strumiłowa, where we fared better. We stayed in Kamionka for two years. In that time, we received the terrible news of the murder of dad's cousin.

Next, we went to Lwów out of fear of the Ukrainians. It was just before Easter. Easter Monday came and we went to see my aunt. After we came home, we got ready for bed before the evening came. Some people were already asleep in the evening, but mum and I were sitting in the kitchen when we were suddenly deafened by an explosion. We all went to hide in the basement at once because the bombing had started. It lasted the whole night.

There were bombing raids every night after that, but they stopped for us on 13 May because we left Lwów for Łańcut, which was abandoned by the Germans six months after our arrival. The Soviet attack was effortless. The battle lasted a single night.

We were poor again. We left for Chełm where, just like in Łańcut, we were poor, and what's more we had to live in the basement. We scraped through a month like that. Next, we moved to Hrubieszów. Grandma came to us there with horrible news, that is, that grandpa had been arrested in Lwów and taken to Donbass. Finally, there was a moment of joy. Grandpa came back a year later. There were a few fires in Hrubieszów in that same year, and recently there was a raid.