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Memories of the German occupation

On 22 July 1944, when the Soviets started to rout the Germans, there was a battle in Wisznice. The Germans were defending fiercely and did not want to give in to the Soviets. One day German cars, tanks and taxis started driving through the village. A few days later, the German cavalry rode through, followed by the infantry. Everyone was going to Biała [Podlaska], and those who were last and were very tired stopped in Wisznice. That's when they started preparing for battle. There were also a lot of cars parked nearby.

Everything was very dangerous at that time, and even more so at night, when Soviet planes were flying and lighting up [the area] with search lights in order to drop their bombs. The Germans masked their cars with greenery, so that they could not [be] seen from above. When the Soviets reached Parczew, the Germans ordered people to get out, because things might be dangerous. So then people started to take their clothes, food, and go to the forest and to the colonies. We left too.

But when the Soviets reached Horodyszcze, then the Germans did not know what to do, and then they started firing at each other, and a battle broke out. A lot of buildings in Horodyszcze were hit with artillery shells and burned down. When the dark night neared, everyone was trembling with fear and we all sat in the shelter, and we could only hear the sound of shells whistling as they passed above us. When the Germans ran away, they didn't even have time to dress up and put on their shoes. They all ran as far as they could, so that the Soviets wouldn't take them prisoner. They lit up villages at that time, laid mines and blew up bridges, and we saw fires everywhere.

When we were sitting in the shelter, we heard the clattering of Soviet cars driving through the fields. We knew that they were our friends. It was Sunday night. On Monday morning,

when I got up, I saw the Soviet army walking along the roads. What immense joy we felt! People started to greet them.

Mum went home to see what was going on there, my brother went with her, and since he was very curious, he went to the town with his friend. At that time, we were not allowed to go anywhere, because the Germans left a lot of grenades and mines. [Boys] found a detonator near the burnt-out bell tower that did not go off. They started playing with it, and it exploded and wounded them. My brother's two fingers were blown off, and his friend was hurt in the belly. Our neighbor let mum know and she got very scared, but the boys were conscious enough that they didn't run home – they went to the doctor right away. The doctor didn't recognize them at first because they were all covered with blood. Later, they were brought home from the doctor's office. He said that they need to be taken to the hospital. Mum and my brother's friend's father took them to the hospital, which was in Włodawa. They were in the hospital for 20 days until they got better, and when they were fine, they were brought home.

This is my memory of the time of the German occupation.