

Sonia Orbuch

Wartime Experience: Fought alongside Russian Partisans in Poland

I was born in 1925 in Lubomi in the Eastern part of Poland, the youngest child in my family. I had two older brothers. In 1939 when the war started I was 14 years old. We were two years under Russian occupation. My oldest brother was taken to the Russian Army and never returned. He died in a German prisoner of war camp.

When the Germans recaptured our town in 1941, we were sent to the Ghetto, where we remained until 1942. My second brother escaped from the ghetto with a group of young boys to fight the Nazis and soon died in a battle. By sheer luck we were able to escape from the ghetto to a nearby village and forest. Miraculously we found my uncle and together we were hiding in the forests for one year, with the help of a Ukrainian bootlegger who helped with enough food to survive that bitter cold winter of 1942.

In 1943 my uncle's skill as a scout enabled us to join a Russian partisan battalion. My uncle died heroically in the first battle with the Germans. After a year with the partisans we were liberated in the spring of 1944. Right after our liberation my mother died of typhus. In 1945 I got married. My husband my father and I went to Germany the American zone where we remained for 3 ½ years awaiting visas to immigrate to the USA. While in Germany my daughter was born. Two years later we were able to immigrate to the USA. In 1951, our son was born in New York where we lived until recently.

Now I reside in California to be near our children and granddaughter. In my portrait, I am shown with photographs of my family that perished in the Holocaust.