

Stenogram of the reminiscences of Hanna Antonivna Tsybulia, village of Komarovka, Korsun'-Shevchenskii region.

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Stenographer: Polishchuk

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I was born in 1915. I am a member of the "Sov. Mnenie [Soviet opinion]" collective farm. I've lived in Komarovka all this time. I got married for the first time in 1936, to Gritsko Alekseevich Tokarenko.

In 1941, on June 22, my husband left for the army. I stayed behind with my son Antosha, born in 1937, and my husband's mother. Some time later the Germans entered our village.

Our home stood on the road, along the Shenderovsky road. One night, Germans, 6 of them, entered our home. Fearing them, I fled to the attic. The Germans did as they pleased: broke down the door to the animal shed, took the piglet, the cow. Two of them left, but four stayed in the house. Voices and commotion were no longer heard in the house. I climbed down from the attic and went into the hut. One of them grabbed me by the shirt, but I tore myself away and dashed out of the hut. I got as far as the riverbank. They did not come after me. I stayed on the bank until morning. In the morning I returned home. There were no Germans in the hut; they had left for the village of Pochapintsy.

In 1944 all people had fled the village, but I along with my mother-in-law and my son remained in our home. Mother was saying that if we leave the house - all our belongings were at home, we had not buried them - so as soon as we leave the house, everything will be lost. I pleaded with mother to take the cow and leave for some other village, but she absolutely did not want to abandon her home; she tried to persuade me, saying that it was dirty, it was nighttime, we wouldn't be able to see anything anyway, and someone might even shoot at us.

I didn't listen to Mother after all, took the child and went to the neighbor who lived three houses away. Only an old man and an old woman were in the hut. Shortly after, my mother joined us. I needed to go to the cow as she was about to give birth. It was two o'clock at night. I left the neighbor's house, Mother stayed with the child. When I walked up to my home, I saw that all the windows were closed, a soldier stood on the porch. He asked me whether it was my house. I entered the house. Soon mother came into the hut.

We had a telephone in the hut. There were 20 of the Red Army men, they wanted

to eat. I thought that I should cook something for them to eat. I crawled into the cellar and got some potatoes. Some of the soldiers went to sleep, the others remained on duty by the phone and the door. I peeled the potatoes. I placed the wood into the stove and was about to heat up the stove, when the door flew open, and someone shouted "fire." The hut began to be shot at. The light went out. Everything went dark. In the darkness you don't know where to run. All five windows were closed. Objects were falling, glass was flying. This happened around 4 in the morning.

Immediately, when the shooting began, mother fell near the stove. The phone and table fell on the soldiers, who were lying under the table and on the floor. The wall pinned me under the bench. I don't remember anything else. There was almost no return fire from the house. All the shooting came from the bastards. When the shooting died down, I felt that nothing hurt, so then little by little I started crawling out. I was swimming in my own blood. I started searching for mother. I look, mother is dead. In the house there was blood up one fourth of the height of the fireplace.

Seeing this horror I wanted to crawl up onto the stove. I don't know what came over me, it was probably from fear. As soon as I crawled out from under the bench, I heard someone say "Take your best things and run" - It was a heavily wounded Red Army man who said this. I again somehow wanted to crawl up onto the stove, for I didn't even know that the house was in flames.

I heard the German language once more near my house. Without understanding much, I crawled back under the bench in between the battered Red Army men. Two Germans entered the house. One of them stepped onto the back of the Red Army man who had spoken to me and plunged a knife into his throat.

The house began to burn strongly. Both Germans left the hut. Little by little I crawled out from underneath the bench. I ran to the shelter, and there was Tatiana Kuzmenko; she was cowering in the corner and did not see that the house was on fire. The Germans had also burned down her house.

I quickly untied the cow, and we began to run. We got to the outskirts of the village, hurried into a cellar. It was already packed with people. We sit in silence. Then come the Germans, they opened the cellar, ordered us to come out. We all crawled out. Then a "Katiusha" hit us from the direction of the village Pochapinets.

Afterwards I ran to the riverbank, not remembering anything. Don't know who went where. Nine horses stood there, they all immediately fell. The reason why I thought these were Katiushas, is because I knew that the blast from Katiushas was round, with red and blue-colored fire.

I ran back to the neighbor's, where I'd left my son, they were sitting terrified. The house was full of wounded Germans. The boy asked me where Grandma was, why I was bloodied, but I didn't even know that I was covered in blood. I took the boy and hurried into the cellar. We sat there for the entire battle. The battle continued for 6 days. The village was occupied now by the Germans, now by our men.

At some point the Germans told us to make them something to eat... What can you do, you have to go. I crawled out of the cellar, began cooking. As I was cooking

them something to eat, our men came; then they went off somewhere else again.

When our men entered the village after the destruction of the German group, we were afraid to leave the cellar, because we didn't know that [the battle] had already ended. And our men were afraid to open the cellar, thinking there were Germans there. We started to plead with them, only then did they let us out.

After the battle I went to the burned-out site. I found mother. She didn't have any legs and arms, they were completely (burned off), only her beard was left, probably the only reason it didn't burn off is that it had been covered with soil. I buried Mother. Now I was left alone with my son.

All the Red Army men who had been in my house had burned to death. True, one was covered with soil, so he still had his documents on him. His mother wrote letters to our village council, wanting to know how he died.