

## Ruzena Deutschova In Hornberg



In 1987 we visited Hornberg, the village where we were housed after liberation. This is a picture of me and an old lady. Unfortunately, I don't remember her name anymore. We wanted to see her again since she helped us so much at the time. For example, she loaned us her sewing machine, so we could sew clothes for ourselves. It was a borderline miracle that we found her still alive, although she had almost reached a hundred years old.

From June to the middle of August, I was in Auschwitz. When we ended up in Allendorf, we laid down on the ground and kissed it. There were little flowers growing in the camp. Everybody got one bunk, the beds were three high. We got a little blanket, a sack of hay. It wasn't like this in Auschwitz, where we had to sleep sitting on the ground. We couldn't have even laid down. In Allendorf, life was more humane. There were a thousand of us. Seven hundred Hungarians from Hungary, there were about 300 of us from 'Felvidek' ['oberland' in German - literally 'the upperlands'; today, an area in Slovakia on the Hungarian border that was annexed to the First Czechoslovakian Republic by the Trianon Treaty at Versailles, then re-annexed by Hungary in 1938 by the First Vienna Decision.] I always signed up to work everywhere, I ended up in the kitchen. Of course, my knowledge of German helped me. I worked in the kitchen to the end of our time in the lager.

I didn't have to work in the munitions factory. The factory was four or five kilometers [2-3 miles] from our quarters. I thought that everything was underground, since the big trees covered everything, they nearly barricaded the camp in along with the factory. I was in the factory one time, when my sister got sick. I saw what work they did there. In the Allendorf shell factory, they filled bombs. The work was very difficult. They left in the morning, got a half liter of milk. They drilled out the bombs, put in the wicks and the detonator. It looks like the work was very detrimental to your health, that's why they gave you milk, too. We stayed in Allendorf until March. Allendorf belonged to Buchenwald. At the end of March, they evacuated us. We marched day and night, for I don't know how many days. The Germans with us, but they didn't shoot us. They were

going to Berlin, we didn't know where we were going. They locked us in a pen where there were sheep grazing. They wanted to burn us up with the pen. The SS who were with us in the camp didn't do this. Adolf Hupka was his name, he didn't burn us up. He was a decent person. Whatever he could, he did for us. He was a decent person. The female supervisors in the camp were very horrible. But he was decent, very decent. He said to us, 'Tomorrow you will be free, but I don't know what will happen to us.' The next day we started off again, they took the death-head insignia off their caps and coats. Then we spread out in a forest, I think it was the Black Forest.

We just kept fleeing. A Pole took us in to his manor, and told us to be quiet. The manor was full of tanks and German soldiers. We thought we'd fallen into a nice little trap. There were probably twenty of us, the rest had fallen behind. That night he brought us milk, we calmed down a bit from that. All at once a black tank was stopped in front of us. They were blacks. Americans. Soldiers, officers, they even spoke Hungarian. They said, 'Stay here. We'll come back for you at night'. And they came back for us, took us into a village, and housed us in a school there. The Germans were all around us, there was hay and lice, fleas everywhere, but we were so glad. We left again a week later. We ate tinned food, that the Americans brought. The local Germans all hid. The mayor only came to us a week later. The American officer threatened to hang him if he didn't find us places to stay. There were about thirty of us. He put fifteen in one group and fifteen in another place. After this the mayor personally came and wrote down what we needed. They gave us a lot too. They always filled a huge box with food, we didn't suffer from hunger again, they took care of us.

In 1987, they arranged a reunion for those who were in Allendorf. We stayed in a beautiful hotel. When we worked in Allendorf, we never got to see the village, because we were outside of it. It was a little village originally, while today it has become a city. The Germans awaited us with a smorgasbord. They served kosher and non-kosher dishes separately. There were cheeses, fried potatoes, all kinds of fish, that's what the kosher people ate. For us, they served us whatever we wanted. About eight hundred of us gathered there, because everyone brought a partner. There were about four hundred of us and four hundred were kosher. They paid for the trip, and paid for everything. We went by car, and my daughter and son-in-law came, too. On the way there, we slept at the home of one of my girlfriend's from Frankfurt, then we just went to Allendorf. Unfortunately, I didn't recognize my co-prisoners, because everybody was old. However, a few recognized me. They said, 'You're Rozi from the kitchen.'