

# VE day in Hungary

From Bori Toth

This is an account of VE day in Hungary. It gives a very different perspective on what victory meant in other parts of Europe.

## The End of the World War II in Hungary

The 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2020 is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day. The end of the war was a beautiful day all around Europe.

Even though it seemed that the dark days were over, life did not change in Hungary. The Győzelem Napja (=VE Day) was different there.

In WWII Hungary decided to join Germany because they promised us if they won the war, they would give us back those parts of the country that we had lost after the WWI. Our leaders made a big mistake with this decision. During the war almost a million Hungarian people died.

My name is Bori, I am 28 years old. I am from Hungary; Budapest and I would love to show what really happened in Hungary at the end of the World War II through the eyes of my grandparents.

My grandma, Kate was only 5 years old in 1945. She lived in a tiny village (close to the Austrian border) called Nagytillaj with her family but her dad was out at the battlefield.

My grandpa, Benjamin was 10 years old at that time. He lived in a small village, Tiszasas in a different part of the country with his mother and brother.

My grandpa's dad had to join the war in 1942 and he became a member of the 2nd Honvéd Army. He died alongside with 200 000 other Hungarian soldiers in the battle at River Don because of the lack of food and equipment. My grandpa lost his father so did millions of other children around the world.

Hungary was liberated from German occupation on April 4. However, with the "liberating" Soviet army, more occupiers arrived.



My grandma told me stories about what happened when the Soviet army was chasing the Germans through the country. When they arrived to my grandma's village they took literally everything. They made women to slaughter all their chickens and cook food for them. They took all their money, gold and anything that had value. They even took my great grandma's clothes for the female soldiers. Young women in the village

between the age of 15-30 had to put old lady's clothes on to save themselves from being raped by the soldiers. Others were hiding in the loft to stay safe.

My grandpa talks about nearly the same events as my grandma about the Soviet occupation. He remembers that Hungarians to keep each other safe in his village, spent the nights with their neighbours. Next morning when they wanted to go back to their own house, they found 2 Russian soldiers sleeping there already. My grandpa can even remember their names: Mihail Mikulica and Rota Vasile. Luckily, they did not take anything from his family, but when the Soviet group left the village, they took my grandpa's 16-year old brother with them. He was lucky enough, managed to escape and hide in the corn field to make sure nobody is after him before he started walking home. Everyone feared the soldiers. That section of the Soviet army only stayed there for a few weeks, but that was enough to make sure, that a child like my grandpa will never forget those days.

The war did not leave anything behind just poor, miserable and sad people. The end of the WWII was the beginning of the 45-year Soviet occupation with Communist ideology, with Soviet leaders and army in Hungary.

For us, the day of victory was 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 1989 when the new form of state, the Republic of Hungary was proclaimed without soviet intervention after 45 years.

Monument with the names of the victims of the WWII who lived in my grandpa's village

My great grandpa is the first on the list

