



HELENA FIGIEL

Volunteer Helena Figiel, born on 4 October 1921 in Obroszyn, the Lwów voivodeship.

While still a student, I was deported along with my mother to Kazakhstan, on 13 April 1940. The Aktobe Oblast, the Jurun train station. In Jurun the NKVD assigned us to a kolkhoz called Komsoy.

Komsoy is in the utter steppe, with a number of Cossack huts and a river flowing across it. We lived in old state buildings infested with bedbugs. Several families shared one room – only women and children. There were no men.

There were Ukrainian and Jewish families among us. We worked digging irrigation trenches. All we could buy with our pay was 700 grams of bread and a liter of milk. The clothes we had brought with us from Poland were the only clothes we had.

The NKVD wasn't especially hostile to us, but we were required to attend the propaganda meetings which they organized.

In order to receive medical assistance or to be admitted to the hospital, which was located near the train station, we had to use all our powers of persuasion.

In the fall of 1940 a typhoid fever epidemic broke out, killing mainly the young and strong, while in the spring of 1941 exhaustion took the lives of the elderly and children.

On 4 September 1941, we were released. Those who had some strength left tried to leave soon after the release. Later people weren't allowed to go.

We received letters and packages from the home country. The packages were often empty.