



## JADWIGA BIBIŁO

Volunteer Jadwiga Bibiło, born on 11 July 1922 in Nacewicze, district of Grodno, Białystok voivodeship. I graduated from elementary school in Łumna in 1937, and thereafter from economic school in Nowy Przybyszew, also in 1937. That is where the War surprised me. On 15 December 1939, I crossed the Soviet border and returned to my parents, who were living on the manor farm of Wiktoryn. The Soviets had dismantled the manor, allowing only us to stay.

On 24 March 1940 they arrested my father, of whom I have no news to the present day, while my mother, I, and my younger siblings were deported to the USSR, to the village of Sokolovka in the Oktyabrsk District of the Kazakhstanskaya Oblast, and there left to our fate. We had to find accommodation on our own, and finally did, however the rent was ten rubles per month. We were forced to pay for each slice of bread, and soon we had to sell all of our possessions. We spent the first year without any work – as a matter of fact, Poles were forbidden to work at the kolkhoz at all. For a month, I worked privately, making bricks, receiving four rubles for a hundred. We had to pay a tax of 20 rubles, and also buy leather, eggs, milk. Then in the second year they forced us to work at the kolkhoz. The work was hard. They wrote out the number of *trudodni* [working days]. We received no payment. We Poles were forbidden to grind grain, for the mill was available only to kolkhoz members. We had to grind each grain of wheat using hand-mills. Bread was our only food.

Due to a lack of vitamins, many Poles fell ill, and some even died of scurvy. One Mrs Sakowska lost three children in the space of a month: Tadeusz, Zofia and Halina. There was no medical assistance.

On 31 June 1941 they announced the amnesty. They gave us release certificates. But they still forced us to work. Towards the end of our detention it was even worse, for a pood of wheat cost 150 rubles. And they paid nothing for the *trudodni*. The train station was two hundred kilometers distant; there was no way to leave. The representation didn't give us any help. I and a friend managed to get out of the camp – with great difficulty – and travel to Guzar. My friend was looking for her father, while I accompanied her for a time. Next, a transport was organized to Persia. I couldn't join it, for I was not from a military family. I wanted to return, but I was unable to purchase a ticket; neither could I remain in the



kolkhoz, for I had no means of living. I was forced to change my surname to Tomaszek. My friend's father registered me as his sister. On 28 March 1942, I crossed the Soviet border and arrived at the first Polish camp in Tehran, while on 9 June 1942 I joined the Women's Auxiliary Service of the Polish Army. In Tehran, I completed a course for drivers. I then left for Kizirybat, where I received my driver's license and graduated from a school for non-commissioned transport officers.