

Kürti Malvin And Relatives Taking Apart Their Hiding Place



This photo is from the Turiec region, near the village of Motycky, where we were in hiding. It was taken in April 1945 and shows the taking apart of our hiding place. We'd been in hiding there since the beginning of winter in 1944.

In the forest we found some used parachutes. There were silk ones as well as cotton ones. Because they were wet, like naive civilians we spread them out. Suddenly Stukas attacked us, fighter planes with guns. Luckily nothing happened to us, because there were bushes nearby. If it hadn't been for those bushes, they would have shot us to bits. After we'd been in the mountains for several days, some army patrol came by. They gave us food and clothing. They stood up on some high ground and threw us army shoes and clothes. What you caught, you kept. Our group was all strong men, so we got it all. Bags of sugar, and dry peas which we had to throw out though, because they were full of worms. We even got rice. There was so much of it that after the war no one wanted to even see rice. We drank coffee. I remember to this day that they'd bring it to us packed into cubes along with sugar. We'd throw the cube into a cup of boiling water. The result was a terribly sweet drink.

The younger of the Kürti brothers, Karol, was in charge of our group. We were relatively well armed. We had guns and ammunition. In the meantime, we had to leave the lumberjacks' cabin. We ended up under the open sky. But we needed to live somewhere. Well, and because our group was all builders, engineers, we began to build. There was a very steep rise there, so that's where we decided to build. We made L-shaped trenches. It was raining buckets. Great attention was paid

to everything. Trees were cut right above the ground. Nothing could be allowed to betray us. Each mistake could cost us our lives. From the trees we built temporary scaffolding. We also made tent sections with which we covered the scaffolding. There we spent the first night. We lay on branches we'd cut. At least it wasn't raining on us anymore, but on the other hand the wind was blowing at us from all sides. We lived through it. In the morning we worked busily on.

After two or three days we already had a roof above our heads. The roof was made from a tarp and branches. Again nature helped us out. We stuck branches into the ground close to each other, which we then also crisscrossed together. November was approaching. It started being cold. We were constantly improving our dwelling. We even discovered a half-ruined cottage made of bricks. So we carried those bricks over and built ourselves a stove. At least we had something to warm ourselves by. Close by, about two kilometers away, we also had a source of drinking water. It was some sort of spring. We widened its channel. You can imagine how much we enjoyed carrying it.

On 20th November 1944, the first snow fell and stayed. At that time we already had a roof above our heads, and even those parachutes had finally dried. After that we were no longer freezing. After 20th November we didn't take anything off, but put on all the clothes we had. It was so cold that our hair would freeze to the tent sections. What's interesting is that none of us even sneezed. Our situation was gradually improving. One road worker lived nearby. Because the Kürti brothers built roads and bridges, everyone knew them. He told us that he had a Meteor brand stove for us. It was really heavy. The Kürti brothers and Ruzicka went for it. They had to take turns carrying it, because the path was uphill. That was the first night we didn't put everything on. We felt as if we were in paradise.