

## Chaim Poltorak With Friends



This is a picture of my uncle Chaim Poltorak, and his two friends. Chaim is in the center. This picture was taken when he was on the front. He sent us this photo in 1944.

My father, Dawid came from Sosnowiec. His father's name was Abram, his mother was Tema. There were six children in all. Four daughters and two sons. One daughter was called Rachela, the second one Sala, the third one Laja, and the fourth one was Bluma. And my husband's brother was Judka. And Laja got married to Chaim Poltorak.

When the war broke out, we were in Lodz. My father decided to go, with other men, to save Warsaw. He came back after two months. My mom told him: 'Listen, there's no point in you being

here.' So he said: 'My two friends are crossing to the other side', that's how they'd say it, to the other side of the Bug. So my mom said: 'Go together with them.' She had arranged with my father that if, God willing, he'd be alive, she should look for him in Bialystok, where he could get registered in a waiters' union, or in Lwow. We couldn't get a message from him, because my father didn't know where we were. My mother found him in Lwow. My father rented an apartment, we slept on the floor, there were these huge cockroaches and it cost 5 zloty a night. We managed to get used to all this somehow, we weren't so scared anymore and we found out that the brothers-in-law were there, and also Bluma was in Lwow with her husband.

Meanwhile, they had started catching us for labor. That is - deportations! They deported us, but they said it was for work. My dad said: 'We can sign up for work.' My mom said she didn't want to? Some plants in Russia were recruiting employees and my father said: 'Well. How long can this war last? Winter, summer, it will be over soon, we will go home.' We went to this city and those in-laws also went with us. Entire transports went there from Lwow. The city was called Vyksha. We didn't move during all the war, but Chaim Poltorak, went to Kosciuszko's army, to the 1st Kosciuszko Infantry Division

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When we found out the war was over, we started trying to go back to Poland. And we traveled and traveled until we reached Poland. We went to Pieszyce, in the Regained Territories. And Chaim Poltorak, the one who was in the army, came to the station! He was there as a military settler. That means that he was in the army, later when he left the army he got this farm which used to belong to the Germans. What great happiness, he said: 'I'll take you from here.' My dad, of course, didn't want to go with him, he wanted to go where they told him to. Mom said: 'If you want to, then stay here, I'll take the children and go.' But he didn't let her get off alone. So we all got off. Uncle gave us a room in Pieszyce in a wooden house which used to belong to the Germans, no toilet, no water, nothing. He said - 'You sleep here, I'll bring you bread and milk in the morning.' I woke up in the morning waiting for that bread and milk and there was nothing. Nothing. No bread, no brother-in-law. Mom said to my father: 'You know, let's leave the children, go out on the street and perhaps we can find someone we know.' Although my dad was a very resolute and stubborn man, he let her talk him into it. We went out, there were lots of people from Lodz there and, somehow, there was no more happiness. And this uncle appeared after some 2 or 3 weeks. He came, mom didn't even ask about the milk, and said: 'Come, I'll take you to a different place, a better apartment.'

A short time later, he went to the United States, and he died in a car accident.