

Destined to Survive

By Barbara D. Janusz

Last year just after my annual Reading Week visit to Edmonton my father, Mieczyslaw Janusz, at the ripe old age of 85 years, began waking up in the middle of the night with heart palpitations unable to catch his breath. After numerous consultations with his family doctor and specialists and undergoing an array of tests he was diagnosed with congenital heart failure and prescribed a regime of medications that he now religiously takes with his breakfast every morning. It did not, therefore, come as a surprise when my son Olek and I arrived this year for Family Day long weekend that my father immediately brought up the subject of his memoirs.

My three sisters and I had been brought up in an intensely political home. My parents had both immigrated from Europe in 1948 as political refugees and my father, in particular, had been intent on preserving his Polish heritage and instilling in us an appreciation for Central European culture. My childhood had been unique, predominantly on account of the indelible imprint that the Second World War had left on the psyches of both my parents. My mother, Krystyna, deceased since 1987, had spent a good part of the war in forced labour in Germany. My father, a graduate of the Military Academy had been inducted on September 1, 1939 to the front line of defence against the omnipotent Nazi military machine. My mother spoke very little about her life during the war, except figuratively, as in remarking about how war unmitigatedly deprives a person of control over their life. My father on the other hand, embraced whatever information was disseminated through the media about the war that had indelibly defined who he'd become.

I recall in the early 1960's on late Sunday afternoons the CBC broadcasting a documentary of that dark period in European history. The narrator's British accented commentary expounded upon the original black and white footage of Hitler on the steps of the Reichstag in Berlin exhorting all Germans to rise up against the world, to assume their rightful historical position as a ruling Aryan nation; of German tanks rolling across one European border after another; of emaciated concentration camp survivors liberated by Allied troops; of Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill seated shoulder to shoulder at Yalta, deciding upon the fate of millions of Europeans after Germany's ultimate defeat; of the Nuremberg trials that set a precedent for the prosecution of crimes against humanity.

My father's story begins as already mentioned on September 1, 1939, the official historical eruption of the Second World War. On that fateful day he was wounded in combat, seriously enough to warrant begin relieved from his suicidal position on the front line, but not so gravely as to later impair his ability to become earnestly engaged in the Polish resistance movement that sprung up immediately after Nazi occupation. Conveyed for medical treatment to a hospital in Lodz (coincidentally my mother's birthplace), my father was ordered upon his discharge therefrom to report for further military service to the Eastern part of Poland where Soviet occupation had been facilitated through the secret Ribentropff Molotov Non-Aggression Pact. Hitler's Nazi soldiers were advancing from the west, Stalin's Red Army from the east. Poland's fate was sealed within a matter

of 17 days. The Soviet Red Army immediately began implementing a nefarious program of deporting Polish civilians from the eastern territories to forced labour in Siberia. They also systematically targeted Polish officers, like my father, for extermination. Three years later, as Hitler's army pushed eastward towards Moscow, the Nazi's discovered a mass grave of 14,000 Polish officers in the Katyn forest near the Soviet town of Smolensk. It would take another five decades before the Soviets admitted responsibility for the systematic murder in the spring of 1940 of so many thousands of Polish officers and the nefarious political strategy of undermining resistance to Soviet occupation and annihilation of the sons of Poland's upper crust. While my father could not have foreseen the lethal fate of his genre, his retreat from the eastern front proved later that he was destined to survive.

Notwithstanding his decision to return to his hometown of Katowice at the opposite end of the country, my father and other members of the Polish armed force courageously took up the banner of resisting foreign military aggression and occupation by conspiring against the enemy and going underground. Naturally the first step in the transition from officially defending the homeland borders to conspiratorial resistance was to shed any semblance of having been a member of the Polish armed force. In honour of his graduation from the Military Academy my grandmother had purchased for him a finely woven wool cape that matched the colour of his green uniform. The cape having become redundant my father commissioned a tailor to have it sewn into a suit. He then boarded a train for Katowice.

The first stop on his three-day journey was the city of Lublin where in a private residence for displaced soldiers he struck up a conversation with a medical corps officer. Following the usual introductions the new acquaintance asked my father whether he had a brother by the name of Stanislaw who was a pharmacist. My father answered in the affirmative. The medical corps officer's face immediately darkened. My father's heart began to beat irregularly and asked him what was wrong. The officer's face faltered as he related that Stanislaw had lost his life in the bombing of the train that had been evacuating patients from the hospital in Torun to Warsaw; that the patient that Stanislaw had been attending to had survived while he had died.

As the locomotive pulled its way into Katowice my father imagined Nazi soldiers patrolling the platform. Fearing the green cloth of his recently tailored suit might draw suspicions that would culminate in his search and a demand to produce identification he considered jumping off the train before the station. Other anxieties also weighed heavily on his mind – whether his family was still residing on 13 Mariacka Street, and how to tell them about Stanislaw? Without incident he disembarked from the train at the station. His anxiety and despair mounted, however, upon noticing that the Germans had posted large placards in German proudly proclaiming, “We thank the Fuhrer, Hitler, for liberating the Poles.” The Polish government prior to the Nazi invasion had been socialist and Hitler's government was strongly opposed to Communism or any socialist political system. The Third Reich placard was a sinister reminder that like those soldiers who'd been mowed down by German tanks on the front line those first days of September the life that my father had known earlier had been annihilated, reduced to a mere memory and that

Silesian Poles, as elsewhere, had been deprived of their freedom and right to self determination.

The family home was within a few blocks of the station in the heart of Katowice's commercial district. Mieczyslaw noticed that many of the storefronts now bore signs in German. His father had died just months earlier and his mother valiantly and single-handedly continued to run the family restaurant and bar. Briskly walking down the narrow sidewalks lining the cobblestone streets, Mieczyslaw feared that the Nazis might have confiscated the family business and if so he wondered how they would eke out a living.

He opened the front entrance of the tenement, mounted the broad wooden staircase to their apartment, and knocked on the door. A stranger answered, a new servant, who immediately called his mother. Babcia embraced him and then asked, "And where is Stanislaw?"

Apart from the eldest son the family was intact, including the business, which his mother was allowed to operate for another two years until 1941. My father took the lead in organizing a cell of resistants. Many of their meetings took place in the Janusz residence and their ultimate goal was to travel to France to join the Allied forces by crossing the border into Slovakia. Unfortunately their first and only attempt to realize this objective culminated in my father's first incarceration in Jaslo near the southern border of Poland.

Having assumed the identity of one Aleksander Dorski his family knew not to contact him in Jaslo to safeguard his true identity as a Polish officer. The cell of resistants had filled their jacket pockets with U.S. dollars and jewellery to feign the appearance that they were smugglers. Charges were never laid due to prosecutorial blunders and nine months later, on January 1, 1941, my father was released from custody. But he didn't return to Katowice. Instead, Mieczyslaw immediately took up the cause again in the nearby town of Rabka Zdroj.

Having learned that the French were not making any progress on the western front, my father and others became masters at espionage. They honed their senses of sight and hearing and through their tightly organized network of resistant cells crucial information regarding Nazi military operations were secreted out of the country to the allied forces on the western front. My father's role as district commander of the underground army became solidified in the spring of 1941 after the family business in Katowice was expropriated by the Nazis and the entire family relocated to Zalesiaki, Wielun where my father took up employment as a secretary/clerk in a rock quarry. By this time he'd abandoned his false identity as Aleksander Dorski, falsified his deceased brother's papers by adding his name and photograph, and thereby assumed the occupation of pharmacist.

Meanwhile, German casualties required the relieving of any able-bodied German men from administrative positions in occupied Poland. These vacant positions became available to Polish citizens and my father took advantage of a six-month crash course in milk products and cattle breeding offered at the University of Poznan. There he met his

future fiancée, Felicia, who he later recruited into the resistance movement. Following his graduation, he was hired as a dairy products controller. His new position required him to travel about the district to conduct inspections and facilitated the gathering and dissemination of counterintelligence in which his resistant cell continued to be actively engaged.

One of the key functions of a district commander was to administer the oath of allegiance of the underground movement to a new recruit and then to train him in the intricacies of gathering counterintelligence. Each recruit was then assigned a particular post and for reasons that confounded my father and other members of his cell, the Kalisz post was incessantly in need of new recruits. Likely the Nazi officer in charge of administering justice in Kalisz had fostered so much fear and terror in the hearts of Kalisz residents that the identity of a newly assigned resistant could not be kept under wraps. Upon administering the oath to one new recruit my father got a bad feeling but he suppressed his fear and assigned him the notorious Kalisz posting. Within days, on October 28, 1943, Mieczyslaw was arrested for treason and confined to jail in Kalisz.

The conditions were crowded and unsanitary. Several dozen prisoners were housed in one cell necessitating that they take turns sleeping on the concrete floor. The anxiety that each prisoner endured was felt collectively by everyone. It could take two months before a prisoner was finally called to face the charges brought against him by the Gestapo. My grandmother paid the Nazis a small fortune in bribes to secure her son's release in time for Christmas, which for the Poles is a significant religious holiday. Had his fiancée, Felicia, not been arrested and succumbed to the brutal techniques of extracting confessions from prisoners, my father would have been released from custody and spared the degrading deprivations of the concentration camp.

My father, of course, did not learn about his mother's aborted efforts to free him until many years later, but immediately upon being called to face the wrath of the Gestapo he learned that Felicia had been forced to betray him. The Gestapo harshly berated him for recruiting such a young woman into the resistance movement. When they'd met in Poznan two years earlier, Felicia had been a high school student just eighteen years of age. Hitler had mandated that the minimum sentence for anyone caught conspiring against the Third Reich was forced labour in a concentration camp. Felicia was no exception and spent the balance of the war in Ravensbruck Concentration camp, near Berlin, which exclusively housed women and children. My aunt, Jadwiga, the youngest daughter had also been recruited into the underground by my father and, like Felicia, survived the horrors of Ravensbruck.

From Kalisz my father was transferred to the jail in Lodz where he learned that he was sentenced to life imprisonment in Mauthausen Concentration camp near Linz, Austria. As customary the world over, prisoners are typically placed in a holding cell before processed and assigned to a permanent cell for confinement. The holding cell in Lodz prison was very crowded but through the throng of angst-ridden faces Mieczyslaw spotted the unmistakable young visage of Felicia. They couldn't believe their good fortune! Someone must have committed a serious blunder because my father still faced

further interrogation by the Gestapo and through his brief encounter with Felicia was able to learn what she'd disclosed to them. His heart sank when he learned that she'd disclosed that he was a Polish officer, a fact that he'd succeeded in keeping hidden from authorities since leaving the eastern front in September 1939. Polish officers, in particular, were considered to be a threat to the Nazi occupation of Poland as borne out by the leadership role assumed by my father in the resistance movement and by the sentence that he'd been meted out. Mauthausen Concentration camp was a category 3 camp, which meant that the prisoners there could expect the most brutal and harshest of treatment.

Notwithstanding Felicia's indiscretion the couple embraced and bid one another farewell so tenderly that many of the other prisoners in the holding cell also succumbed to tears. Before being summoned out of the holding cell Felicia took the scarf that she wore around her neck and tied around my father's saying, "see you again in Poland." My father did indeed see Felicia again in Poland but not until 1970 when he and I visited the family over Christmas. Widowed at the age of forty-seven we found Felicia in failing health, living in impoverished conditions in Poznan with one grown daughter. After partaking in tea and some Polish pastries in her humble home my father confided to me that he felt guilty about how Felicia's life had unfolded. Having immigrated to Canada in 1948 his life had obviously taken a turn for the better, while Felicia, upon returning from Ravensbruck, confronted a war torn homeland that was subsequently destined to endure almost another decade of Stalin's communist terror. My father couldn't believe that notwithstanding her ill fortune she still didn't harbour any ill will towards him. For me, it was a testimony to that generation's unfaltering self-sacrifice, strength of character, and high moral fibre.

The conditions in the Lodz prison were as loathsome as those in Kalisz. It was impossible to stay clean and the inmates struggled incessantly against the spread of genital crabs and lice. Although most of the prisoners had already been classified for transport to one of the many concentration camps that dotted the landscapes of Germany, Poland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia, there were random executions wherein an inmate would be called out of his cell, taken out to the yard, and shot. This was a common method that the Nazis implemented to maintain a culture of terror amongst the prison population. Fortunately, my father survived his two-month period of incarceration in Lodz and was then transported by train to Poznan where he was corralled with hordes of other prisoners into cattle cars for the long journey across two borders to Mauthausen Concentration camp.

Still dressed in the green wool suit that he'd had tailored for himself on the eastern front four years earlier, apart from his underwear, a hat and jacket, his socks and shoes, my father's only possessions consisted of his toothbrush and eyeglasses. The entire convoy embodied cattle cars with 40 to 50 prisoners crammed inside each car. There were no blankets, only straw, and because it was now February of 1944, many prisoners died of exposure on the way. The few criminals amongst the political prisoners immediately assumed a leadership role and mandated that when the prisoners relieved themselves in a bucket that they clean up after themselves to reduce the risk of contracting typhus, diphtheria, and other communicable diseases. The criminals also ensured that the meagre

food rations, which usually consisted of a watery soup and some dark bread, were distributed equally amongst the prisoners.

The convoy pulled into the railway station at night. As my father disembarked from the cattle car he sensed the scent of pine and the unmistakable crispness of mountain air. For the next fourteen months my father would incessantly be dismayed by the irony of this death camp being almost surrealistically juxtaposed against the backdrop of the exquisite, natural beauty of the Austrian Alps.

Established in 1938 shortly after the Anschluss, the political union of Austria with Germany, the camp's construction began with the transfer of prisoners from Dachau Concentration camp to the Mauthausen rock quarry site. Later the thousands of Spaniards who escaped to France after Franco's Fascists won the Spanish Civil War were targeted as enemies of Nazi occupied France and transported to Mauthausen. It is estimated that between August 1938 and May 5, 1945, the day the camp was liberated by the U.S. armed forces, some 206,000 were imprisoned in the "Mother Camp" and in the 49 permanent and temporary sub-camps in the vicinity.

From the railway station to the camp the prisoners were required to walk a considerable distance uphill. The prisoners who were in poor physical condition had to be helped by those more able-bodied to reach the camp gates. Such acts of kindness, unfortunately, proved to be pointless as the infirm did not survive the quarantine that preceded every prisoner's eventual assignment to a bunkhouse.

The quarantine began upon arrival. The prisoners were ordered to strip and to descend to the showers. There was no heat and no towels provided. After exiting the shower my father tried unsuccessfully to control his freezing, shivering body. Along with the other prisoners he was required to queue up for issuance of a numbered identification bracelet and a pair of wooden clogs. Each prisoner received either an undershirt or a pair of cotton pants. My father, luckily, was issued a shirt that was long enough to cover his buttocks. The prisoners were then escorted under guard to the quarantine barracks where four prisoners were assigned to one bunk and issued one blanket to share.

By this time many of the prisoners from sheer exhaustion, the shock of the shower, and the frigid temperature had become hysterical. The guards kept telling everyone to be quiet, threatening to open the windows if they didn't calm down. Overnight some of the prisoners died. The quarantine was designed to eliminate those inmates who were not physically strong enough to perform hard labour. Their remains were disposed of in the crematorium.

The following day my father's head was shaved and he was issued his striped white and black prison garb with a red triangular crest bearing the letter "P" for his Polish nationality and his identification number printed alongside. The red colour distinguished my father as a political prisoner. Criminals were issued green triangles; homosexuals pink; religious dissidents purple; and so on. Officially each prisoner was required to be quarantined for thirty days. That first night of shivering, the incessant screaming of

delusional inmates, and the threatening shouting of the prison guards to keep quiet, brought home to my father the hopelessness of his situation. He no longer felt afraid or terrorized. He felt only a daunting, morbid numbness. He became hopelessly resigned to the fact that he would die there like so many who'd preceded him.

Fortune, however, intervened. The next day a transport from Italy arrived; a convoy of the Bagdolia army who'd resisted Mussolini's fascist regime. A backlog of administrative clerical work necessitated the recruitment of a prisoner with working knowledge of German to assist in the processing of camp documentation. My father volunteered and was selected. He was immediately extricated from quarantine and assigned to bunkhouse number 7. As he was delegated to fulfil these duties at night he was able to sleep in relative peace during the day, which of course helped him to keep his strength.

Everyone without exception was required to work. The main occupation after construction of the camp was completed was to work in the rock quarry. Many prisoners considered this work assignment a death sentence not only because the food rations were insufficient to sustain a person relegated to such arduous hard labour, but also due to the quarry's location. The quarry was accessed from the steep approach road and the infamous "death steps". There were 186 steps in total and here, over the course of the war, many prisoners lost their lives being crushed to death by falling boulders or sometimes by being thrown by guards over the steep face of the quarry at the base of the steps. The Nazis sardonically called this ridge the "parachutists' cliff".

After 1943 many prisoners were transferred to work in the larger Austrian munitions factories near the sub-camps. In summer reveille was at 4:45 a.m.; roll call at 5:15 a.m.; working hours from 6:00 until 17:00 hours; with an hour midday break. In the winter the prisoners rose at 5:45 a.m. and work in the quarry ended at dusk. Sundays were a day of rest except for those who worked in the munitions industry.

It wasn't long before my father realized that not unlike his nightmarish journey from Poland to Austria when the criminals ruled the roost in the cattle cars, a hierarchical form of self-government prevailed at Mauthausen. Each bunkhouse had a capo who was typically of German and sometimes Ukrainian descent. The Ukrainians had lost their right to self-determination as an ethnic state after the Russian Revolution in 1917 and some of their territories had become part of the new Polish state that emerged in 1918 after the First World War. Following the Nazi occupation of Poland many Ukrainians conspired with the Germans against the Poles and were consequently despised not only by Polish prisoners but also by the general prison population. The culture of the death camps naturally encouraged those who were the most hated and sadistic to assume positions of leadership. If a prisoner failed to toe the line it was not uncommon for the capo to simply submerge the head of the man in the large water barrel that for fire prevention purposed stood at the entrance of each bunkhouse. The capo would keep the recalcitrant's head in the barrel until he died from asphyxiation.

Indeed many of the most brutal acts of violence in the barracks occurred at night because the SS guards were housed outside the camp and during the day everyone was so engaged

in their individual work assignments. Twenty-four hours around the clock SS guards with machine guns took turns manning the watchtowers. Escape was impossible because the barbed wire that ran along the camp wall was charged with an electric current of 380 volts and at night large mobile searchlights lit up the immediate surroundings of the camp wall. If the capos didn't deal directly with a recalcitrant prisoner they would report the inmate to the SS guards. At roll call the next morning the SS would, before the eyes of the entire demoralized prison population, brutally dispose of the man. Typically the recalcitrant was chased to the fence where the barbed wire would electrocute him. Also, random selections took place during roll call to weed out those deemed by the camp SS physicians to be too infirm to work. A team of prisoners was assigned the grisly task of disposing of such deceased prisoners in the crematorium.

My father's first clerical work assignment, which lasted for three months, allowed him to gradually become psychologically hardened to the realities of the death camp culture. Once the administrative office backlog was cleared up he was transferred from his clerical assignment to the bomb brigade. Working with a team of prisoners in the surrounding countryside, he was required to dig up bombs that had failed to detonate after being dropped by the allied forces' aircraft. It was dangerous work but not without its benefits. Many of the local farmers gave the prisoners food and even wine, which they shared with the guards in exchange for the privilege of being able to secrete such treasures back into the camp for consumption or trade. Near the end of this work assignment, before being transferred to the fire brigade, providence again intervened when his work crew dug up a time bomb that detonated upon excavation. My father was taking a break at the time and would have surely died along with the others in the explosion.

At this moment, looking back at all the hardships that he'd endured, my father realized that since the beginning of the war a higher power had kept propitiously intervening in his life and that he was destined to survive. Apart from providence however, being blue-eyed and blond, tall, well build, and handsome, my father had undoubtedly been favoured by the SS guards who had been indoctrinated in the sinister philosophy of eugenics. The science of improving the qualities of the human race, particularly through the offspring of parents, eugenics was the foundation for a macabre belief system that the German Aryan race with the same physical characteristics as shared by my father was superior to all others. Darker skinned brunettes with brown eyes (typical Jewish physical characteristics) were considered to be inferior. Accordingly, it was not uncommon for those camp inmates who had not been naturally endowed with Aryan colouring and physiognomy to be treated more brutally. Some were even subjected to nefarious medical experiments. The fact that my father was fluent in German and was proficient with a typewriter had also undoubtedly been instrumental in ensuring his survival.

The fire brigade was considered to be the choicest work assignment in the camp because, as in the case of the bomb brigade, the inmates worked outside the camp boundaries and had the opportunity to receive food from the local people. The work had the added bonus of being much less dangerous. Since Mauthausen was in mountainous, wooded terrain,

forest fires were frequent, particularly in the spring of 1945 when allied forces aircraft intensified their bombings of Nazi strongholds.

My father recalls that the SS guards of the camp treated POW American pilots who'd successfully parachuted out of downed aircraft bombers with particular vengeance. The Nazis, throughout the war, routinely and flagrantly ignored the Geneva Convention of 1864. The Convention, to which Germany was a signatory, is an international treaty that established the humane treatment of prisoners of war, of the sick, the wounded, and the dead in battle. The concentration camps, in and of themselves, constituted a violation of the Convention, but when American pilots were captured in the forest near Mauthausen the Nazis didn't even process their capture or subsequent incarceration in the camp. They were promptly assigned work in the rock quarry and required to work until they collapsed from exhaustion. The Germans were so enraged by this time that they were losing the war and that one German city after another was being subjected to systematic bombing that they took out their frustration on these poor American pilots whose families would not even be able to later trace what happened to them after their aircraft had been downed by the enemy.

On the morning of May 5, 1945 my father and his crew were fighting a fire when they spotted a tank. From a distance they were unable to determine whether it belonged to the Allied forces or to the Soviets. Like Napoleon more than a century earlier, Hitler's troops had encountered a protracted stalemate on the eastern front. Through sheer perseverance and determination, not to mention horrific numbers of casualties (which ultimately translated into more than one in ten Soviet citizen losing their life during the war), the Soviets managed to launch an offensive that culminated in a retreat of Hitler's troops. The Allied forces had done little to assist the Soviets in their struggle on the eastern front and now hungry for power Stalin's Red Army pushed further westward almost as far as Mauthausen Concentration camp. Everyone in the camp knew beforehand that the war was finally drawing to a close because the sound of gunshots in the vicinity could be heard particularly at night when the echoing gunfire resounded in the surrounding mountainous landscape.

Fortunately for my father and the other inmates the tank was manned by American soldiers. Tears of joy rolled down their soot covered faces. The war was finally over! The Americans ordered them to abandon their fire fighting and to return to the camp. Again my father's instincts told him that returning to the camp at this time might not be the best plan. Having been forewarned through Nazi intelligence of the American advancement the SS guards had already fled the camp. In those final days before the camp's liberation the prisoners couldn't help but notice older men in Nazi uniform having assumed positions of authority in their stead. Now lawlessness reigned supreme. Before my father's own eyes he saw two of the members of the fire brigade killed by overzealous rifle toting prisoners. To have survived almost six years of war, including incarceration in a concentration camp, only to lose one's life on the day that the Nazis finally surrendered was a tragedy that defied comprehension!

The Americans assumed authority over the camp's operations, including the most important function of distributing food to the starving prisoners. My father recalls seeing many prisoners gorging themselves on the food, some of which was too rich for their emaciated bodies, to the point that they died. Later a strict diet was implemented to prevent such further tragic incidents from reoccurring.

During the chaos that attended the camp's liberation the water tower and sewage system were destroyed. My father remained on assignment with the fire brigade whose duties now also included the provision of water by filling the water tank several times a day and transporting it back to the camp. The brigade was given a special pass to operate outside the camp boundaries and two weeks into their new assignment, at night, the brigade decided to escape the oppressiveness of Mauthausen Concentration camp once and for all. They drove all night in the fire bomber truck, showing their pass to the American border controls that had been established as part of the Allied post-war peacekeeping initiatives. Their destination was Murnau, a prisoner of war camp for officers that had also been liberated by the Americans. In Murnau my father was reunited with some of his fellow officers and subsequently recruited to fulfil various post-war military assignments in Italy.

Two years later Mieczyslaw was demobilized to England where he received clearance from Canada Immigration for permanent resident status. Eight days after embarking on the trans-Atlantic journey from Southampton to Quebec City, on September 28, 1948, my father landed in Canada. A further three-day journey by train through the St. Lawrence lowlands and across the Canadian Shield and prairies landed him permanently in Edmonton, Alberta.

About the author – Barbara D. Janusz graduated from the University of Alberta in Edmonton with Bachelors of Arts and Law degrees. After practicing law in Calgary for nine years she relocated to La Paz, Baja California Sur Mexico to raise her son Olek, and to pursue a second career as a writer. She continues to reside in Calgary with her son and boyfriend Garry, and teaches Law and Management at Mount Royal College.

It was with great enthusiasm and a sense of responsibility that the author undertook the project of writing "Destined to Survive", not only because her father was so determined to pass on his story to others, but also due to the media's tendency, since September 11, 2001 to glorify man's inherently misguided disposition to resolve conflict through war.