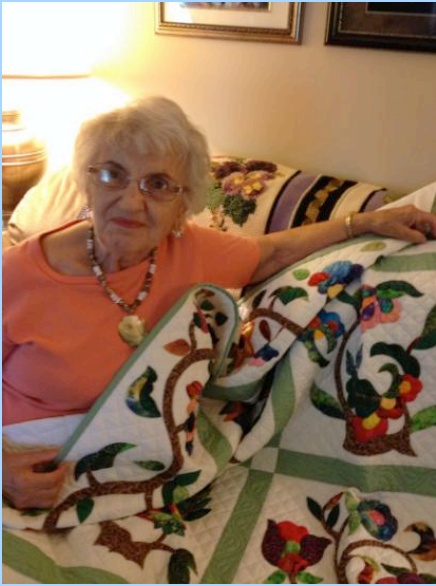


Teri Thomas



Silver Stitcher Teri Thomas a member of the Scrappy Quilters Guild of Calhoun, Ga was born Teresa Leska in Sulejow, Poland in 1927. She lived with her two older sisters and her mother and father, who worked as a power plant engineer. When war broke out in 1939 she was just eleven years old and witnessed the bombing of her town from 12 kilometers away at her grand-mother's house where she had been sent for safety as the youngest child. She remembers how fearful she felt not knowing how her family was. When the bombing which devastated the town of 10,000 people was over she returned to Sulejow and resumed her schooling.

Her father was secretly involved in the Polish resistance movement. Her family aided allied airmen who parachuted in behind enemy lines. One morning in 1943 her father and sister had both left for work when 6 Nazi Gestapo soldiers knocked on the door and were there to arrest her father. A young neighbor hearing what was going on ran to the town bakery where her sister, Sabina worked to tell her what was going on at home so she could warn her father. She was able to warn him and he got away but on the way back to the bakery one of the gestapo who was from that town recognized her and they arrested her for abetting her father's escape. Sabrina spent 2 years in Auschwitz. Three weeks later Teri and her older sister, Lili were both arrested. They were put on a train that was to transport them to an ammunition factory in the Ruhr Valley in Germany, but the train's progress was slowed due to the train tracks having been bombed. While they were stopped waiting for the tracks to be repaired a local farmer asked the soldiers if he could have 6 of the prisoners to use for work on his farm as all of the young men had been conscripted into the army and he needed some laborers. Teri and her sister 4 were among the group chosen so the farmer saved her from a hard experience of working in the factory. She remained there working on the farm, so did not starve. The two sisters were separated and were just 2 miles apart but they did not see each other for two years. They were liberated when General Patton came to their rescue on April 3, 1945. As the Sherman tanks rolled through the village she was in the path and would have been run over but a black American soldier jumped off to the tank and pulled her to safety. It was the first time she had ever seen a Negro. Teri and her sister were in a relocation camp run by the American MPs. Her sister wanted to return to Poland to look for her son. Teri decided to stay in the west. She had no idea what had happened to her parents, nephew, sister and Aunt.

She met a young man who had been part of a group of prisoners who were liberated by General Eisenhower. He spoke good English and wanted to go to America. They were married and one year later they applied to a consulate in Frankfurt to emigrate. It turned out that the Consulate was staffed by Cordell Hull who had been a friend of the boy's parents who recognized him and his brother so he put them on the top of the list of approved candidates. They shipped over in a navy freighter. It took 10 days to reach the US. They settled in Michigan and had two daughters. Her husband was a building contractor. Sadly he died 16 years later of cancer. She remarried her husband, Max to whom she has been married 51 years and they lived in both Mass. And Calif., where his job with General Dynamics took them. They had two more daughters. Teri did lots of crewel needlework, sewing and knitting when she was young. In 1979 she took a quilting class from the CA extension program and completed her first quilt using the quilt as you go method. She still has this beautiful quilt. They moved to GA in 2000 and that is when she joined her local guild and the GQC. Her hand quilting is exquisite. She is a true master quilter.

She was blessed that all of her family survived the war. Her mother had also been arrested and sent to Ravensbrück where she was subjected to medical experiments on her legs, which she suffered from years later. She had been liberated by the Red Cross and spent 6 months in Sweden recuperating from her ill health. Her aunt, nephew and father had all survived Satthrough the help of the resistance. They all returned to their home in Poland. She is an amazing lady!

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