



Rose Haneman Holocaust Survivor



Some of the nuns who saved Rose

I was born in Belgium of Polish parents. I have a sister five years younger.

I was seven years old when the Nazis invaded Belgium. My father decided we had to leave and perhaps make it to England. With a few belongings we set off, marching all the way and sleeping on the ground. We did not realise that so many others would be doing the same. Sometimes when I see images on TV of people marching for their lives, I am reminded of that march. During that march and crossing a field, we saw planes overhead dropping bombs all around us. We ran for shelter and found lots of soldiers inside, they were British soldiers also seeking shelter.

We were told to go back home as there was no way to cross over to England. France and Holland had also been invaded.

We lived in a Jewish area and our street was filled with children, perhaps as many as 80. My parents decided it was not safe for us children there and put us in a convent in the country. For safety sake, we were baptised, given a new name, and a Godmother. We spent nearly 3 years there, seldom seeing our mother. Our time there was spent going to church and confessing our sins. The convent was a teaching order, but only one nun taught us. These were harsh years, but if it were not for those nuns, priests and Godmother, we would not have survived. They certainly had the courage to care. Many priests and nuns were shot by the Nazis, when they were found to be sheltering Jewish children.

After the war, we found out that my sister and I were the sole child survivors of that street.

In 1947 we arrived in Australia, to this wonderful country. I married and have four children. It is only in 2008 that I decided to tell my story and to join 'Courage to Care' in its important task.