

The Siege of Leningrad

through the eyes of a child



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Designed by Rosie Pontin at www.creativoeducation.co.uk

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FOREWORD

This book is the result of work carried out by children from two very different nations. They were united by the idea of creating a lasting testimony to the children who survived the Siege of Leningrad.

It has been immensely rewarding to see the interest these young people have shown in researching such a difficult subject. Their eagerness to represent truthfully what they learnt and what they felt has been inspiring.

We all wish to convey our deep respect and gratitude to the children of the besieged Leningrad who shared their memories with our pupils and passed on their precious first hand accounts. We trust that this book will honour their incredible bravery.

I would like to thank the senior management teams of Calday Grange Grammar School, Schools No. 106, No. 113, No. 554, No. 617, No. 623 and No. 635 in St. Petersburg, as well as Educational Centre "Konstanta" for their support. Indeed, their faith in our project sustained us through the many months of hard work. I would also like to thank all the teachers who were involved in this project, whose energy and expertise constantly inspired us.

Finally, I would like to thank the British Council, Mr and Mrs Salmon, Hannah Roberts and the company HITEC Exports Ltd for their financial support in the publication of this book. There are too many pupils to thank individually, however, four students deserve a special mention. They are Tim Hurst, Stefan Smith, Sam Thompson and Redd Edwards-Price.

It has been a privilege to have been part of this project and hope that our work will touch the hearts of many others.

Ekaterina Hughes

Head of Russian Department

Calday Grange Grammar School

Предисловие

Эта книга – плод больших усилий и гигантской работы детей двух разных народов. Их объединила общая идея – сохранить память о блокаде Ленинграда, увиденной глазами детей, и передать их воспоминания будущим поколениям.

Мы приносим большую благодарность за поддержку и за веру в общее дело администрациям школ Calday Grange Grammar School, школ №106, №113, №554, №617, №623 и №635 С-Петербурга, а также Образовательного Центра «Константа». Мы очень признательны столь многим учителям, которые отдавали силы и знания, вдохновляя своих питомцев. Низкий поклон и уважение тем блокадникам, которые, рассказывая детям о событиях тех лет, делились с ними ценнейшими воспоминаниями из первых рук.

Особую благодарность мы выражаем Британскому Совету, супругам Салмон, Ханне Робертс и фирме HITEC Exports Ltd за финансовую поддержку в публикации этой книги. Неотъемлемой частью проекта стал Мемориальный фонд Криса Салмона, выдающегося ученика и талантливого лингвиста школы Calday Grange Grammar School, при помощи которого нам удалось собрать необходимые фонды для этой публикации. Хочется отметить вклад учеников Тима Хёрста, Стефана Смита, Сэма Томпсона и Рэда Эдвардс-Прайс в составлении и редактировании книги на основе собранных материалов.

Для меня, как для учителя, нет ничего прекраснее, чем видеть увлечённость молодых людей, их стремление к познанию и желание открыть для себя новые горизонты. Я считаю за честь быть координатором этого проекта.

Екатерина Хьюз

Заведующий русского отдела

Calday Grange Grammar School

My dear readers,

I would like to present to you this book, which is the creation of the talented pupils at Calday Grange Grammar School and the Schools of Primorgski District in St Petersburg.

In 2007, alongside the independent research collaborated in Britain, pupils from Calday went to St Petersburg, formerly Leningrad, to share in the eye-witnesses' experiences of the Siege of Leningrad. The theme of this book is very close to my heart as I was born in Leningrad. I hope that the acts of heroism, strength, and courage of the people within the Siege will not fade over time. The pupils who worked on this book had a vision to explore and share the first hand experiences of those hard times in Leningrad.

This book stands out from the rest, as it was written by the young people of two great nations, from memories of the children of that time, and will serve for generations to come. My deep gratitude extends towards these students, who were inspired by the history of my beloved city, to create such sensitive poems and heartfelt illustrations, and towards the teachers' outstanding encouragement and professionalism.

With best wishes and good luck with your project.

Vasily Petrenko

Principal conductor of Liverpool Philharmonic Hall



Image sourced from www.imgartists.com

Dedication

As the creators of this book and students of Calday Grange Grammar School we would like to dedicate this book to Christopher Salmon.

His invaluable contributions throughout are lasting tributes to his linguistic talents and passion for Russian studies. During the school visit to St. Petersburg in 2008, his words from the poem "Ghosts of Leningrad" touched the hearts of all and moved everyone to tears, especially those who lived through the Siege.

Sadly on the 5th of February 2009, Chris unexpectedly passed away. His eternal smile and shining charisma will always be remembered by all who knew him. Despite being 60 years apart, he connected with the lives of the people and the events that took place.

We hope that the depth of his compassion and understanding will help you see this period of history through different eyes.



A Brief History of Leningrad

Leningrad, now known as Saint Petersburg, is located in the north-west of Russia, on the Neva River bordering the Baltic Sea. Leningrad, like many of the large cities of the world, has an interesting history. For example, throughout history, this place has been known as Sankt Peterburg, Petrograd, Leningrad and St Petersburg.

Leningrad first became Russian territory when Peter the Great invaded the stretch of land owned by the Swedish in 1703. Firstly, it was named Sankt Peterburg. Due to its location, and the high quality of land, Sankt Peterburg became the capital city of Russia 10 years later. For 15 years it was the capital city of Russia. In 1728, 3 years after the death of Peter the Great, the Tsars chair was moved back to Moscow, keeping with tradition and opposing the previous Tsars dreams of modernisation. However, in 1732, Sankt Peterburg was renamed the capital of Russia.



Monument of Peter the Great, Moscow



Map of Saint Petersburg (Leningrad region)

Over the next 200 years Sankt Peterburg became one of the most industrially developed cities in Russia, as more buildings were erected in Sankt Peterburg than anywhere else in Russia. The capital became a cultural city, when art and literature received a figurative boost. A few of the many talented people who lived and worked in Sankt Peterburg include Dostoyevsky, Gogol, Pushkin and Shostakovich.

During the First World War, Sankt Peterburg was renamed Petrograd, because the previous name was thought to be ‘too German’, and as the Russian revolution continued, this name was appreciated. It was therefore in Petrograd that the February Revolution occurred, which ended the monarchy of Russia, and eventually put Vladimir Lenin into power.

On January 21st 1924 Lenin died and as a tribute to Russia’s great leader the city was renamed Leningrad.

World War II introduced harsh times to Russia. Initially, Russia had signed a peace treaty with Germany, but Hitler overthrew this treaty when he launched Operation Barbarossa, a three pronged attack for invading Russia, one of which was to attack the city of Leningrad. Hitler was so confident in his victory that he pre-printed invitations to a victory celebration. However, Leningrad was never defeated, and remained in siege for two and a half years. When Hitler was asked for orders once Leningrad had been seen, he responded first by saying “Leningrad must be erased from the face of the Earth”, followed by “....we have no interest in saving lives of the civilian population.”

Tim Hurst, 15 years old



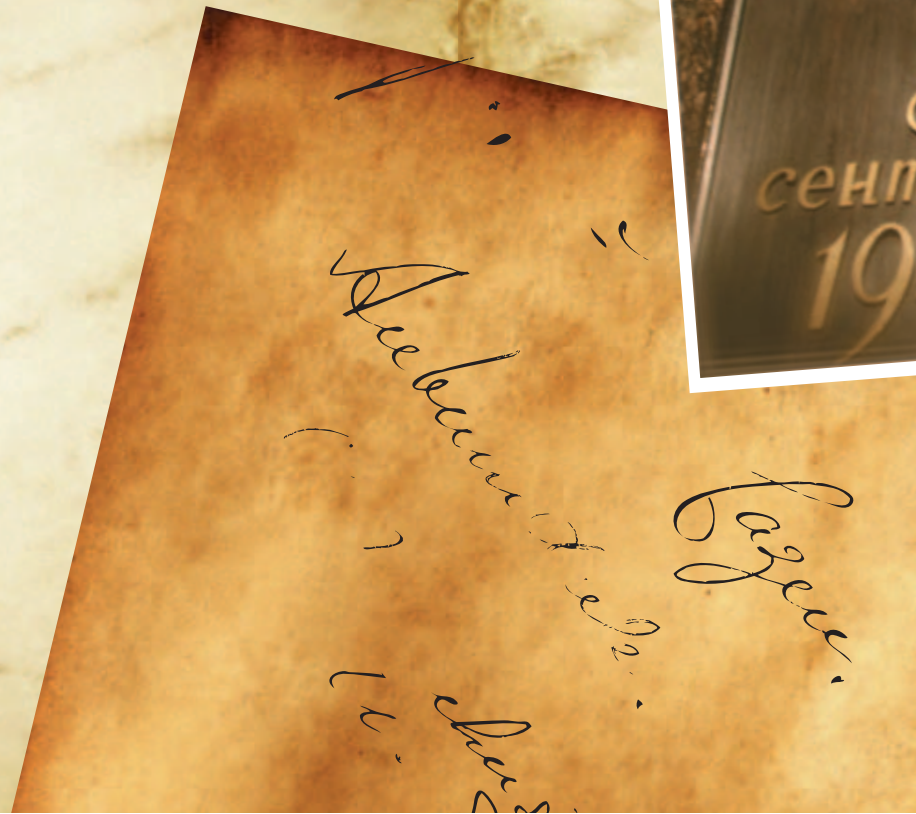
A Brief History

The Siege of Leningrad, also known as The Leningrad Blockade, was the German siege of Saint Petersburg during World War II and was one of the longest sieges of a city in history, lasting 900 days. The German plan was coded as Operation Nordlicht.

The siege lasted from September 8th 1941 until it was lifted on January 27th 1944.



*This commemorative plaque can be found in **Victory Square, St Petersburg**. Chronicles of the heroic days of the Siege of Leningrad, 8th September 1941 - 27th January 1944.*



Leningrad

Siege of Leningrad,
Bombs exploding,
Fascists trying to enter our beloved city,
What are you doing? Leningrad is ours!

Nobody said you could pass into the city,
Nobody expected this
Destruction everywhere
No-one is safe
The whole city under siege

The heroic deaths will be remembered,
And the length will not be forgotten,
Those who gave everything,
Those who died hungry and tired,
From defending our lovely city,
Leningrad.

*Written by Artyom Maletski, 12 years old
Grammar school 554*

Translated by Stefan Smith, 15 years old

Ленинград

Блокада Ленинграда....
Взрываются снаряды....
Фашисты вторглись в город наш.
Куда вы? Ленинград не ваш!

Без спросу вы ворвались,
А вас никто не ждал.
Гранаты здесь взрывались,
Весь город воевал.

Мы помним подвиг Ленинграда.
И помнить будем до конца,
Как много дней была блокада
И тех, кто отдавал сердца и жизни,
Город защищая, без сна и хлеба умирая.



*"The Frost" by Zakharova L.,
12 years old, Grammar School 554*

From Elena Ivanovna Varvarova's diary, originally from Boitsy goroda-fronta, fighters of the front-line city, pg. 86-106 (St. Petersburg: 2007)

22/06/41

War with Germany. I'm collecting my belongings, just in case.

19/11/41

I spent last night in a hostel. Today, as I was bringing my things back home, I saw that a bomb had fallen in front of our house, and my bed is covered in plaster, pieces of window frame and glass. It's fate!

30/11/41

The question on everybody's lips - will this last long?

07/12/41

Japan declared war on America and England, and England - on Finland and Romania.

20/12/41

I cannot recognise myself in the mirror. My eyes are swollen and my gums are bleeding.

22/12/41

Today it's six months since the war began, and the shortest day.

24/12/41

Today has been the hardest day. I lost my ration cards for meat and grain.

I must have dropped them when I was getting my 1 1/2l beer.

How can I live any longer?

03/01/42

There's one thought in my head - I want to eat, if only a drop of something sweet.

Translated by Michael Walker

Здравствуйте, Рема, Алик и все!

Как вы там живёте?

Мы здесь живём очень плохо. Только одно хорошо, что тревог не стало, зато артеллерийский обстрел по всем районам. Мало того, да ещё второе несчастье, света нет. Сидим с коптилкой. А голодные как волки зимой. А у меня аппетит такой, что кажется, что если бы дал три буханки хлеба, всё бы съел. Жаль, что всё по карточкам, так что ещё пока еды очень мало. Белого хлеба, пирожного, торта совсем нет. Булочная недалеко от парка, а другой магазин совсем далеко. А мы живём на острове Декабристов, а транспорта нет и надо пешком идти. Нам помогает одна девушка, ей спасибо.

Мне скоро 8 лет.

До свидания

Hello, Rema, Alik and all of you!

How are you?

Our life here is very bad. The only good thing is that we have less sirens, but we are getting more artillery shootings in all the districts of the city. On top of that we have no electricity, yet another torment. We use a little kerosene lamp instead. We are so hungry, like wolves in the winter! And I have such an appetite, that if I had three loaves of bread, I would eat them all right to the last crumb. It is a shame that the bread is rationed so we have very little food. There is no sign of any white bread, cakes or cream cakes. The bakery is not far from the park, but the other shop is really far. We live on the Decembrist island, and transport doesn't work at all, so we need to walk on foot everywhere. The young woman is helping us, to which we are very grateful to her. I am turning 8 soon.

Good bye

Part Two

The Road of Life

One of the only ways to get food into the city was to use the frozen Lake Ladoga. Though the weather was extremely cold for the people of Leningrad, ironically it was not cold enough to sufficiently freeze the lake to allow it to cope with the weight of lorries. The lake was frozen enough to stop barges bringing in supplies but the ice had to be 200mm thick to cope with lorries. It only achieved such a thickness at the end of November creating the “Road of Life”.

Through this vital artery, about 514,000 city inhabitants, 35,000 wounded soldiers, industrial equipment of 86 plants and factories and also some art and museum collections were evacuated from Leningrad during the first winter of blockade. While the road was protected by anti-aircraft artillery on the ice and fighter planes in the air, truck convoys were constantly bombarded by German artillery and airplanes, making travel dangerous. Some survivors therefore bitterly recall the route as a “Road of Death”.



First-hand Account of one survivor, driver Maxim Tverdokhle

Maxim Tverdokhle was delivering tangerines from Georgia as New Year presents for the Leningrad children in the middle of the night crossing frozen Ladoga Lake. “Two Messerschmitts attacked me at 20 kilometers,” Maxim recalled. “Screaming overhead they soared up, turned backward and attacked again targeting at the back of the truck and the cabin. I accelerated, slowed down, steered right, steered left, and all around me the snow burst out with myriads of snow flakes. I drove frantically... My cabin was riddled with bullets. The windscreen blew into smithereens. And the next minute I felt something hit my arm and scald it. I lifted it to prevent loss of blood and not to lose consciousness. Steam was coming out in clouds from the knocked out radiator and I could see nothing in front of me. I could have jumped out and escaped in the roadside but what would have become of the tangerines for the children? So I thought, no, I will make it there!’

The fearless driver did manage to make it to the shore. Later on they discovered 49 holes in the truck. And the children of Leningrad got tangerines from the sunny republic of Georgia for New Year.

Research by **Rory O’Mahony & Daniel Johnson**, 14 years old



“Road of Life” by Kolnieva Irina,
12 years old, Grammar School 554



This is a map of the Ladoga Lake near Saint Petersburg which froze over during the Siege. It shows the route that people travelled to get food.

“Ladoga Lake” by Dariya Lapsar, 13yrs old, sch.113

Part Three

A wardrobe which survived the siege;
many were ground into wood chips and
used to create bread



Bread rationing...

Anita Azarova, 12 years old, recorded the memories of her grandmother...

“My grandmother worked very hard at a bread factory. At times she had to use an axe in order to cut through the thick layer of ice which surrounded the sacks of flour. When the workers sieved the flour they often found bullets, bits of bomb shells, and pieces of bloodstained cloths from the overcoats of soldiers. Bread was essential for the survival of the people of Leningrad. Nothing was more precious. Unfortunately there was not much flour available, so they added sawdust, glue, whole grain, cellulose and grass, which made it sticky and heavy like clay.

Bread was also rationed. Workers were given 400g per day, people in service - 300g, children and the unemployed – 250g. During the harshest time of the siege the lowest ration was 125g.

Bakery plants had to work without stopping. Apart from the flour, water was a key ingredient for baking the city's bread. Although the river Neva was close, the pipes did not work as in autumn the electricity was cut off. Even the hand pump on the bank broke, due to the fearsome frosts of the winter 1942, so the factory was left without water yet again. The only way to get water was to cut a hole through the thick ice with an axe and bring it to the plants in buckets. Dozens of people lined up in a row from the embankment to the factory passing on endless buckets of water. Workers, pupils, students and young housewives stood like frozen black posts passing the buckets of water. The factory needed thousands of these buckets to function.

Cold piercing winds cut through the peoples' clothes. In -35C the frostbite seemed more unbearable. Buckets of water were sailing from hand to hand. No-one dared to take a break as they knew there were hundreds of people freezing to death, waiting for the precious bread at the bakeries.

In order to tip the water into the tank, the strongest people had to stand at the end of the row. Lida Raikova, a friend of my grandmother, was the final person in the row who had the job of tipping the water into the tank. This meant that she was splashed more than anyone else as the water flowed into the tank. Once, at the end of her shift, Lida was trying to rush back to the warm shelter but she couldn't. Her legs were locked in the ice. The only way to free her from the icy prison was to cut the ice away around her boots using an axe."



"Submarine" by Gulyaeva Valeriya

17 years old, School 113

Due to the harsh conditions throughout the winter, the row was formed each day until a submarine managed to dock on the embankment by the bakery plant, which could use its pumps to transport water. The people of Leningrad couldn't thank the marines enough for the burden they had lifted off the citizens.

The following statistics show how long the food rations were predicted to last in 1941:

Grain and Flour	35 Days
Groats and Pasta	31 Days
Meat	33 Days
Fats	45 Days
Sugar & Confectionery	60 Days

The total number of deaths during the siege is estimated at 1.5 million, including civilians and the military. About 1.3 million civilians managed to escape evacuation, mostly by foot. By the end of the siege in World War II, Leningrad had become empty with a vast amount of ruined and abandoned homes. Its population was drastically reduced from around 3 million people to below 700,000.

The Soviet government reported around 670,000 registered deaths from 1941 to the beginning of 1944; although the majority of deaths were unregistered, so the overall death toll is unknown. Damage was visible to sites and landmarks throughout the city, some still evident and preserved today to commemorate those who gave their lives to save the city now known as St. Petersburg.

Research by **Chris Salmon**
15 years old



Fresh Leningrad Bread & Jelly Feeds 2

Bread

Ingredients:

Grain - 70g

Rotten wood chips – 20g

Fresh glue – 20ml

Paper – 1 A4 sheet of paper

Grass – handful

Jelly

Ingredients:

Sheep intestines

Calf skins

Rations

“I swap my cat for 10 bars of carpenter’s glue” *

During the siege there was a huge lack of food. The rations included only 125g of bread made from anything edible accompanied by jelly made from sheep intestines.

Some of the Russian students are taking on the challenge of eating only 125g of bread for 24 hours for charity. All donations are openly accepted and will be given to the siege of Leningrad memorial fund.

Under the rationing system a blue-collar worker was entitled to 250 grams of bread each day. A white-collar worker or a dependent received just 125 grams. These meager rations meant everyone lived on the brink of starvation.

Many mothers would be using similar ingredients to make their bread. Some mothers would have to make a decision no mother should make. If they had more than one child eventually they realized that 125g of bread would not keep both their children alive for much longer so they then were forced to choose who should be kept alive and the other left to die.

**“I swap silvered samovar
(Russian tea pot) for three bars
of carpenter’s glue, antique lamp
for a ration of bread” ***



** These were advertisements found on the streets of Leningrad and in peoples houses. The idea was to encourage swapping anything you own (even a pet) for something to eat or to make food from.*

Gran’s bread ration

Recorded by **Mikhailov Sasha**
15 years old, Grammar School 554

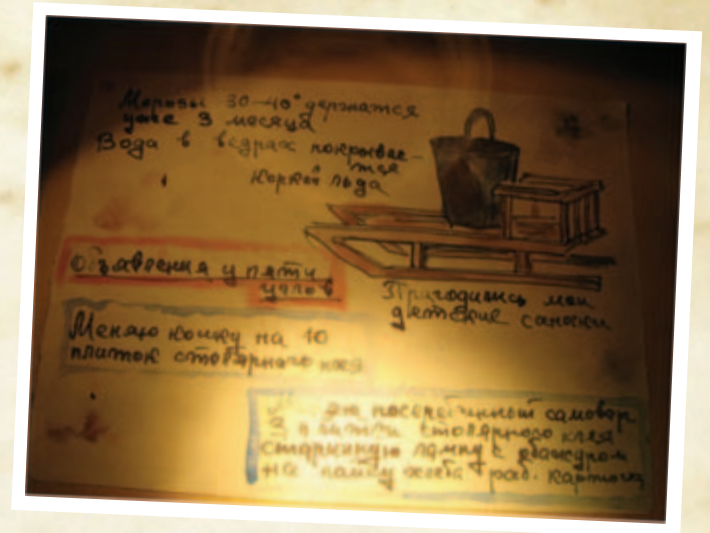
My grandmother received a ration book, which entitled her to no more bread than that given to unemployed people. Everyone went hungry, were very emaciated and some people were even dying.

One day Grandmother was walking home from work. It was cold. Near to her by the small shop sat an emaciated man. He couldn’t move at all. Grandmother understood that he’d gone onto the streets to die. She recognised him with some difficulty as he was so thin. He was in fact her neighbour.

On her way out of work, Grandmother had received a small slice of bread with her ration book, which they were giving out at the factory. When she came a little closer, the man began to groan and fell off the bench. Grandmother ran to him and sat in the space next to him. She remembered the small slice of bread which was hidden within her bosom and kept like a precious jewel. Grandmother took out the bread from her clothes, ate a little herself and fed her neighbour the rest. He chewed slowly, and in his eyes appeared a weak fire. Grandmother gave him the whole ration. He watched her with kind eyes and quietly whispered: “Thank you, thank you...”

Then Grandmother took him home and lit the iron stove. The neighbour lay on the sofa. Grandmother warmed the tea, gave it him to drink, and then left. She also needed to relax after work.

Translated by **William Brockbank**,
18 years old



Part Four

The children of the siege ...

The Siege of Ghosts

I stare up amongst knees and waists,
My hands are still shaking,
It seems our world is falling around us,
Our foundations quaking.

Amongst this crowd we are nothing,
Nothing to these men,
As we await for that army,
We run off to our den.

Back at the flat our dog is gone,
Stolen from our grips,
Now he lies in someone's stomach,
Through their hungry lips.

Food is scarce and so are we,
Since the siege has begun,
As mere children we want to play,
But restricted is our fun.

Ghosts walk amongst us,
In our town and school,
In our market and in our church,
Oh how the world is cruel.

They tell us it'll be over soon,
And we swallow up their tale,
But of course, of course, they were not right,
Now we're all thin and pale.

Written by **Chris Salmon**
15 years old

Осада призраков

Мы не сводили глаз с земли.
Держась за жизнь обеими руками.
Мы не могли поверить в крах
Всего, что нами сторилося веками.

Нами познан весь страх одиночества,
Когда ты никто среди толпы.
И живёшь лишь одною надеждою,
Что отцы и мужья вернуться с войны.

Мы не стерпели потери любимых.
Серый пёс – теперь для кого-то еда.
Все здесь слабы, и все уязвимы...
И каждый сам спасает себя.

Всё меньше и меньше еды,
И нам всё тяжелей держаться.
Мы – родные дети войны,
И нам поныне не положено смеяться.

Мы превратились в тени,
В призраков, блуждающих во мраке...
Мы есть всюду и в одночасье – нигде,
Живём в немыслимом и непрерывном страхе.

Одну лишь мысль в нас не задушили.
Не погубить её ни голодом, ни стужей.
И, может быть, победе и не быть,
Нам в неё вера есть всего дороже!

Translated by **Gradusova Julia**
17 years old, School №617

*The survivors of the Siege were so moved
by Chris' poem 'The Siege of Ghosts' that
Larissa replied (see over page)*

I was only 4 years old when the war broke out. The images of life during the siege were imprinted into my childhood memories forever. If it was not for the protective love of my mum, brother and nursery teachers I would not be able to survive psychologically.

Today I am on my eighth decade. But I am entering this stage of my life with ease. I am entering it with Chris. The poem by this teenager moved me greatly: How does this lad, born 50 years after the war, know how hungry people stole a dog from our neighbours to feed on it? That Vaska, our cat, was eaten by rats?

I imagine two children, Chris and myself, wandering about the city, its streets, squares and churches. We are accompanied by the ghost of hungry death. Everything around us is on fire. The house next door to ours is crumbling, as well as the children's clinic in our yard. We are walking hand in hand together, through every day of the siege. There were no tears then. Today your poem opened up my heart. These are the tears of gratitude to you, Chris. You, who do not know the horrors of war, stretched your hand into the 40s.

Your heart understands what happened then in Leningrad. There your soul filled up with compassion towards the suffering people and found its wings. There your spirit strengthened. Now I am descending from my mountain, finishing my route, and you are only at the bottom of yours, about to start your climb. And today I am happy that you stretched out your hand. I am giving you mine, so that it will be easier for you to climb your summits of life. I pray to God that your way of life will be wide, light, interesting and happy.

Thank you, my dear friend.

Larisa Vasiliyevna

Eyewitness of siege of Leningrad, Veteran of WWII



Veterans of the Siege share their stories during a visit to Russia



Лариса Васильевна

*A letter written to the pupils of Calday Grange Grammar School
by the veteran after the meeting*

Dear friends,

I was very happy to meet you in St. Petersburg and I was amazed that you showed such a great interest in the siege and in the citizens of Leningrad at that time. It was a pleasure for me to share my memories and experiences of that difficult period of my life with you. Our meeting touched me deeply, and I was pleased to see your eagerness to find out more about that time and the events that took place. Also the experiment that you carried out at your school whereby you lived for 24 hours on 125 g of bread impressed me greatly, almost as much as I was impressed by how well you spoke Russian. Whilst talking to you it was clear that you had learnt a lot about the siege of Leningrad and I am grateful to your teachers for being a source of inspiration for all of you in your studies.

Finally, I would like to thank Calday Grange Grammar School and School 106 for giving us both this unique opportunity for our generations to meet.

With respect **Petrova Tamara Ivanovna**
The citizen of the besieged Leningrad



Дорогие друзья!

Я рада была с вами встретиться в Петербурге. Меня сразу поразило, что вы английские школьники интересуетесь блокадой и жителями блокадного Ленинграда. Я была рада поделиться с вами своими воспоминаниями и впечатлениями о самых трудных днях моей жизни. Меня растрогала эта встреча. Мне было приятно внимание и ваше желание узнать больше о этом ужасном событии. Так же большое впечатление произвело на меня то, что вы проварили эксперимент и жили на 125 граммов хлеба в день. Меня порадовало ваше хорошее владение русским языком. Здесь хочу поблагодарить Вас, Екатерина Вячеславовна, за то, что вы сумели заинтересовать мальчиков русским языком и историей России.

Во время беседы я почувствовала, что вы, мальчики, уже достаточно знаете о блокаде. А ваши вопросы звучали как желание узнать лишь подробности от тех, кто действительно пережил эту блокаду.

Ну и в конце я бы хотела сказать большое спасибо организаторам этой встречи (Calday Grange Grammar School; школа № 106 г. Санкт-Петербурга).

С уважением, Петрова Тамара Ивановна, житель блокадного Ленинграда.

Тетя

P.S. Буду с нетерпением ждать новых встреч.

At our meeting with veterans in Russia in February, we asked them some questions...

Q. Why didn't your family leave besieged Leningrad when it was still possible?

A. I never asked my parents this question during the war, or even after it when I was already an adult. I never dared to question their decision, although I knew that it was possible to get out of the hell that it became. My mum never liked talking about our lives during these hard years, even after the war. She avoided these conversations as much as she could; it was so painful for her to reminisce. Only towards the end of my mum's life was I brave enough to raise this subject. So she told me.

My dad was a very strong willed and decisive person. When my mum suggested evacuation he told her: "Don't you panic! We will survive, we will be fine! I believe it!"

Q. How did you, being a child, carry out your usual lives?

A. We still had our "usual" everyday lives. We went to school or nurseries and to the zoo; we even had New Year parties! As party food we had a most deliciously tasty (as it seemed at the time) semolina. We even had a sweet each! We couldn't believe our luck! It is only thanks to the love and tender care that we felt pouring from our teachers, carers and parents that we could live through the torment.

Q. Were there cases of cannibalism during the siege?

A. Nobody can deny the fact that there were such cases. In the night there were some ladies who will offer you to swap the meat pasty for a ration of bread. As kids we were warned never to trade our bread for any pasties and run as fast as you can from such people. We heard our parents whispering about it but we never actually saw or experienced any of this. It was a crime to use corpses for food and special military forces were always on patrol keeping the order in the city. You must understand that when you did not have a decent meal for nearly 3 years, when your body is exhausted and you suffer from severe malnutrition, your mind goes blind and person can become psychologically unstable. This was the reality that we lived in.

Q. Was there any type of entertainment during the siege?

A. You might expect that through such times normal life would cease to occur, although surprisingly entertainment was driven forward by the need to boost moral. Billboards still advertised the entertainment market. One of my favourite pastimes during the siege was ballet and thankfully performances carried on throughout. It cost our family our precious daily ration of bread to see a performance; I cherished the times spent with my parents at the ballet. I never truly appreciated what the ballerinas had to go through, whilst I was sitting in front of them in my warm fur coat. I never knew that ballet dancers would have to be taken to hospital through injury connected with the cold so frequently. I heard a few times that the frost bite was so bad; the doctors amputated the dancer's legs. The most remarkable thing of all was that even after this; another ballerina would come on stage and continue the performance, knowing what could happen to them.

Q&A

The Siege of Leningrad

The darkness closes in,
The dampness of despair soaks into my bones
A cold fear from within
The horror of being alone

Desperate people roam the streets
A madness runs through their veins
The sound, the echo of the tapping of feet
Pierces my soul, fills me with pain

The walls close in on me
They blanket me with fear
I look out for light, but all I can see
Is the stain of death and a blood red tear.

Nowhere to go, nowhere to run
The scream of children pierces the air
Wherever I turn, the sight of a gun
Why does this happen? Life's so unfair

Tired and hungry I fall to the ground
An eeriness drifts, silence is the sound
Rain shatters my bones it bites at my skin
I lay here alone, a cold fear from within

Written by **Tim Knight**
15 years old



Блокада Ленинграда

Темнота над городом сомкнулась,
Промозглость и отчаянье тая,
И к душе и к сердцу прикоснулись
Холодный страх и ужас завтрашнего дня.

Отчаянные еле ходят люди,
По венам кровь бежит, безумствие неся,
И звуки эха топающих ног
Мне сердце разрывают, душу всю губя.

А стены давят всё сильнее,
Меня вновь одеялом страха накрывая,
Я свет спасения ищу во тьме смертей,
Но метки смерти со слезами открываю.

Куда идти? Куда бежать?
От детских воплей небо содрогнётся,
Вокруг оружие и смерть одна,
Нам только верить в чудо остаётся.

На снег я падаю голодный и без сил,
Вдаль голод, страх и ужас отпуская.
И страхом становлюсь я сам,
Всю душу перед смертью обнажая.

Translated by **Uglanova Ira**
14 years old

Taking some soup from the round oven:
Hot boiling water with crumbled bread.
She poured it in my bowl, pushed it towards me,
And she is sitting there, just watching me as I eat.
“Aren’t you eating, mum? Where is your plate?”
“I have already eaten, my daughter. This is for you.”

I ate for two
Without knowing.
Forgive me, my dear mum!

Winter. Frosty outside. She wrapped me, so you can’t see my nose,
Rushing she takes me home, and hurries back to work.
Under heavy clothes I don’t want to move.
Moaning I ask her to carry me.
I stopped and I wait.
And gathering her last strength
the mother picks up the darling girl.

I took your strength away
Without knowing.
Forgive me, my dear mum!

The first, the most horrible year of torture was through.
Time for us to move to the Big Land. Road of life ahead of us,
Some measly belongings wrapped in cloth.

Mum is tired, resting for a long trip.
An hour is gone, the second, third she does not wake.
Eyes wide open, legs stretched out.
I shake her: “It’s time! Wake up!”
I look into her open eyes,
Wide, unmoving.
Shrieking, I try to get her attention.
She does not hear, she does not breathe.
I did not know that death was
Looking up at me.
Big Land welcomed me,
I was fed and watered, given home,
As soon as the war had finished I went back to Leningrad.
Now I live here with my guilt in front of my mum:
“Forgive me, forgive me, forgive me” I repeat.

Perhaps, even nowadays some people have only bread on the table,
Some of them - caviar,
But I have right to ask all of them:
Make sure that your mother always had food to eat,
So that she save herself, her strength and health.
While the eyes are alive, you need to look into them,
So you can notice if she is in pain
And you will help her then as you can.
And when the light of life will fade her gaze
(let it not happen in the near future),
Just put your hand over her eyes, without fear.
And let God be with you then.

Poem written by Vera Ivanovna

Recorded by her grand daughter Militsiyana Alexandra 17 years old, Grammar school 554

Translated by students of Calday Grange Grammar School



*Sketch by
Aidan Riley
14 years old*



*This sketch was drawn by a little girl
called **Mila** in October 1941 for her Dad.*

The note on the sketch reads:

"Daddy, I am wounded but still alive."

Dear Dad,
I don't go to school any more, but work in a factory instead. There are lots of kids in the workshop, we're learning how to work the machines. Our boss Uncle Sasha says that our work will help defend Leningrad against the damned fascists. Mum also works, but in a different workshop, where they make mines. Dear Dad! All the time I just want to eat, and Mum just wants to eat as well. We don't get much bread now, there's almost no meat at all and no butter. Dear Dad! Kill the fascists!

I remain your loving son, worker at factory No. 5,

Fyodor Bykov

From the diaries 'Blokadnaya zima' - Winter under siege



Part Five

Social life during the siege...

NEW SEASON OPENS IN YOUTH THEATRE

LENINGRAD, 26th August (our correspondent). A new season opened in the youth theatre. The hall was filled with schoolchildren, pupils of vocational schools and children from surrounding children's homes. The children were delighted by Kaverin's play "A Visit To Kashey". It's one of the theatre's best recent productions.

They are currently remaking old productions, such as Vsevolozhskii's "The Marshal's Childhood"...

*From **Komsomol'skaya Pravda** the national Russian Newspaper (St. Petersburg: 18/01/2008), originally from Komsomol'skaya Pravda (27/08/1941)*



From 'Elka' 1941 manuscript

New Year's Party.

Recollections of **F. I. Kazakova**, born 1928 and edited by Ed. Bandurova.

Nowadays many people don't understand why we were so horrified by the bread rations. They often ask "surely you ate something else, didn't you?" Unfortunately, for most people it was the only daily ration. Other items, allocated in the ration books, were missing from the shops - there simply weren't any in the city.

Two days after New Year's eve Mum brought a ticket to a New Year's party at the Small Opera Theatre, which is on Arts' Square, then named after the German socialist Lassal.

I didn't really believe the party would take place. But I had no trouble deciding whether or not to go - in the programme they promised lunch! It was a long way to go and the trams weren't running. Even the fear of bombing and artillery fire didn't stop me.

In the theatre the electricity was working, in the foyer stood an enormous Christmas tree, as tall as the ceiling and decorated with toys and the sparkling lights of a wreath. Lighted crystal chandeliers hung from the ceiling. Beside the Christmas tree a jazz orchestra was playing a beautiful tune. Several pairs of girls a little older than me were dancing, dressed in their coats and boots. The theatre was cold, and nobody undressed.

The lunch was good. For starters we had pickled tomato soup with carrot and potato. It was served in very elegant clay bowls. They gave us 50g bread. For main we had meatballs with semolina. It was good quality and the portions were generous. For dessert we had soya mousse. Everyone was very happy. And how could they not be? After all, at that time, a three-course lunch was more than we could have dreamed of.

Translated by **Michael Walker**



Leningrad's Zoo



During the siege of Leningrad it was very hard, cold and hungry work for the people. But all of these people were able to do something for themselves, whereas life for domestic animals or those in the zoo depended completely upon the people.

In the hardest winters of '41 and '42 all of the dogs and cats were eaten, birds froze and there were no animals. Yet the zoo carried on! Survived! Even during the hardest times!

But how could it be saved?

There were stores of food. Grass was cut for hay. The majority of animals succeeded by being moved, it seems, to Saratov, however some stayed. They could move neither the elephant nor the hippopotamus as they were too big. The elephant perished in the year of 1941. It was wounded during the bombings. It was buried by its keepers. However, during the hardest days they really pitied and cursed themselves, that they hadn't spared the meat. You see, they could have pickled and preserved it... And it was simply buried – and this vast quantity of meat was wasted. The tigers fell ill and died. Other animals didn't perish, in spite of the hunger, fire fights and bombings. They were constantly cared for by the zookeepers.

My grandmother looked after the hippopotamus. It was no simple matter. She caused the zookeepers a great deal of effort. The hippopotamus, you see, couldn't live without water – it had cracked skin. Behind the zoo was a canal, from which all of the zookeepers carried water on sledges. Several times a day they rubbed the hippopotamus with animal fat (although they sometimes ate the fat).

The hippopotamus was very afraid of the bombs. Yet there was my grandmother, looking after it, helping to protect it. Together, they went down to the swimming pool. The hippopotamus lay down in the corner of the swimming pool and Grandmother lay next to it, stroked it and spoke into its ears kind words. So there they were together and survived the siege. Whilst people were hungry, nobody tried to endanger the hippopotamus' life.

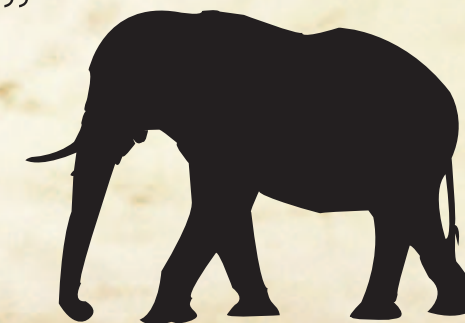
My grandmother continued to work in the zoo for a long time because she really loved the animals. She was awarded a medal entitled: "To a Citizen of the Siege of Leningrad." She spoke a lot about the heroic deeds of the people of Leningrad in the days of the siege, but it always pleased me the most to hear of the zoo and the hippopotamus.

And Grandmother also loved to read poems, speaking of our remarkable city:

**“Not all survived until the victory,
They are no longer amongst the living,
But, like the eighth wonder of the world,
I will remember them.”**

*Recorded by **Anastasiya Ryazantseva**
13 years old, Grammar School 554*

*Translated by **William Brockbank**
18 years old*

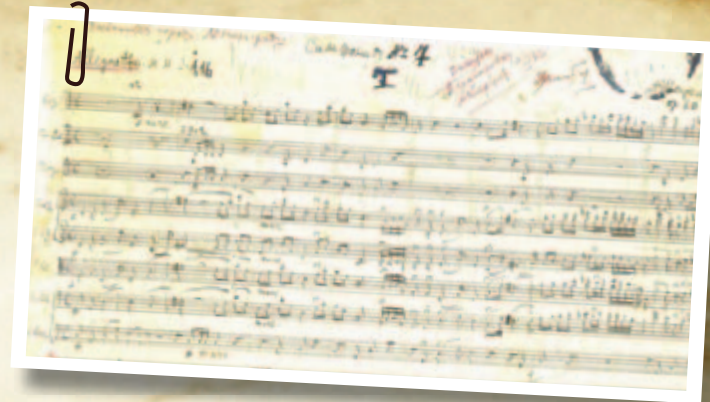


Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich's 7th Leningrad Symphony

Completed in the December of 1941, Shostakovich's Leningrad Symphony (Ленинградская Симфония) depicts the hardship and struggle that the people of Leningrad endured under Stalin's almost dictatorship rule, whilst the invading Germans bombarded the city with the shells of the artillery and Luftwaffe. This chaos is conveyed in the music through Shostakovich's use of dissonant harmonies and aggressive passages. Despite Stalin's idea of Socialist Realism (that is to say all pieces of art had to paint a glorious picture of the Russian nation), Stalin was fooled to believe that this was such a piece of art, yet ironically, Shostakovich intended that it conveyed pragmatic undertones of opposing the oppression that Stalin exerted over his people.

The piece was monumental (and still is to this day) because of the fact that despite depleted food resources, harrowing winter winds, plummeting temperatures and indescribable suffering and death, Shostakovich managed to rally the remaining members of the Leningrad Symphony Orchestra who were well enough to play the entire piece of momentous music over the city's speakers, so as to uplift the enduring people of Leningrad. While the symphony served as a piece of war propaganda, its ultimate message of hope in dark times helped the citizens of the besieged Leningrad to fight on regardless of the hardships that they faced.

The piece has stood the test of time since its premiere at the beginning of 1942. Immediately after the war its popularity diminished, yet today it is revered as one of Shostakovich's finest pieces, coming in at just under an hour and a quarter, with four movements, each symbolising a different aspect of life in Stalin's Soviet Russia.



The symphony was composed during the bleakest days of “the great patriotic war,” as the Russians still refer to World War II; it was begun, in fact, during the Siege of Leningrad, which lasted from September 1941 to January 1944, during which period an estimated 1,000,000 inhabitants of the city died. There is a famous photograph taken during the siege of Shostakovich in his volunteer fire-fighter's helmet. Reluctantly, however, he was evacuated in late September 1941 to Moscow, where he composed the last two movements.

The symphony was premiered in Kuibyshev on March 5, 1942 and given in Moscow on March 29. The microfilmed score was secretly taken by air and road via Teheran and Cairo to the West where it was performed showing the world the Leningrad is not giving up.

Researched by **Will Brockbank**



Mosaic at the Victory Square WWII Memorial.

Shostakovich is depicted sitting in the corner at the piano creating his immortal music

Nobody is forgotten, nothing is forgotten ...

Posters from during the Siege



"We fight violently, we battle desperately, we are grandsons of Suvorov and children of Chapayev!"

"The enemy is by our gate. Send all the forces to destroy it"



Part
Six



"Mother Russia is Calling You"
Luke Fazakerley 15 years old



This dearly loved teddy bear used to belong to a girl, called Nina who later donated it to the museum "Leningrad's flat of Agte family."

Not many things, let alone toys, managed to survive the siege.

“осталась одна Таня”

The diary of Tanya Savicheva, a girl of 11, her notes about starvation and deaths of her grandmother, then uncle, then mother, then brother, the last record saying

“I am left alone”
Tanya.

She died of starvation during the siege.
Her diary was shown at the Nuremberg trial.



Jennya died on 28th at 12 o'clock in the morning 1941.

Grandmother died on 25th January 3 p.m. 1942.

Leka died on 17th March at 5 a.m. 1942.

Uncle Vasya died on 13th April at 2 a.m. 1942.

Uncle Ljosha died on 10th May 4 p.m. 1942.

Mum on 13th May at 7:30 a.m. 1942.

Savichevi all died. I am left alone.

Tanya

From a local regional history competition entry, Anastasia Tsvetkova, 15 years old. Secondary school No. 106.

The water and drainage systems stopped working in Leningrad. It's occupants suffered intolerably. Every day in the city thousands of people died of starvation, dystrophy and bombings. Those who survived the siege say that not even a fantasy writer could have thought up the sort of horror that reigned in Leningrad. But despite all the difficulties of

the siege, the city lived. People went to work, people died from hunger while at work, newspapers were printed; the radio, theatres and Conservatoire (an elite Music School and Concert Hall) all worked. It was in besieged Leningrad that the composer Shostakovich wrote his famous seventh symphony - the Leningrad symphony.

I was outraged when my Mum told me how Hitler, while preparing to take Leningrad, had ordered that invitations to the Astoria restaurant be printed for his entourage to celebrate an easy victory over Leningrad. But even in his wildest dreams he could not have imagined what inner strength and inexhaustible bravery our people possess.

Piskaryovskoye Cemetery,
the main burial place functioning during the siege.



There is a famous Russian saying derived from the siege:
“Никто не забыт, ничто не забыто”

Meaning “Nobody is forgotten, Nothing is forgotten.”

It is engraved into the wall of the main monument.



“Road of Life” Yushina Alena
12 years old, Grammar School 554



There are no names on the tombs of Piskaryovskoye Cemetery, only a year of the burial. Dozens of citizens rest in peace in each grave.

ОДЛОМИЛИСЬ ВРАГИ, В БРОН
САРМИЕЙ ВМЕ
ШКОЛЬНИКИ УЧИТ
ВСЕ КАК ОДИН СК
СМЕРТЬ ИСПУГАЕТСЯ НА
АБЫТА ГОЛОДНАЯ
СОРОК ПЕРВОГО

“I was amazed that you showed such great interest in the siege.” Petrova Tamara, a child of the siege



Part of the team that worked on the project



Calday Grange Grammar School



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