

## Two events with Tomica

1. After the Allies broke through the German-Hungarian front at the end of July, 1944 the forced laborers found themselves retreating as well.

Above us short air battles were unfolding. One day, all of a sudden we saw an airplane, either Russian or Hungarian, coming from the right and falling to the ground while the pilot managed to parachute himself a few meters away from our platoon. That relatively young man then crossed our group right between my row and the one in front when I heard him bursting into a friendly shout:

-«Hey, Tomicam, what are you doing here?»

-«Well, it looks like the Army General Staff has concluded that Hungary cannot win this war without me and my shabby fellows», answered Tomica, the aviator's friend and a former classmate. «How about yourself?»

-«I was doing a recon flight when a Soviet pilot shot me down, and what a surprise, here we are two old pals running into each other! Tomicam, be tough and patient, this dreadful affair will not last much longer. I must rush to the closest military authority now. So long and we shall meet again in our high school yard in Budapest!»

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2. About mid September Tomi got news from his parents that the entire family was taken under the protection of the Swedish Embassy in Budapest. It was such a joyful moment for him! But one Sunday afternoon, when we were corraled at the freight station to unload a few wagons of arms and food, Tomi dropped a heavy case. The warrant sergent beat him terribly with his belt's metal buckle. Even then Tomi didn't lose his bitter humor, shouting:

-«Oh, Gustav Adolf – *the Swedish king at that time*- look at your devoted subject! I thank you from my heart for taking me under your protection, but forgive me, Your Majesty, 'cause it's not in my powers to fulfill your royal wish!»

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