

## **RG-50.407.0271**

### **Summary**

Irmgard Hanner was born 9.6.1930 (unclear if this is European or American style date format) in Dresden. She was an only child and her father died when she was young. She describes her childhood as happy. In 1938, conditions worsened and more of her classmates were disappearing every day due to deportations, most to Riga.

Her mother was picked up in 1939 and sent to Ravensbrück, where she believes she died. Irmgard was then raised by her uncle (non-Jewish) and aunt. Her aunt was forced to work in an ammunition factory, while they were often otherwise confined to their home. In 1940, the Gestapo arrested Irmgard and confined her to a holding camp in Dresden for three weeks before sending her to Theresienstadt.

She describes her treatment and conditions in Theresienstadt. Those who could not work were sent to Auschwitz. Some of her tasks were to harvest leaves for tea and chestnuts for bread flour. Her tonsils were removed without antiseptic or pain reliever. She began menses while there, but they stopped as her malnutrition increased. She never learned of the extermination camps until after the war. She could see the fires of Dresden on the horizon when it was fire-bombed.

On May 8, 1945, the Russians liberated the camp. She credits luck as the reason for her survival. Her aunt found her through the Red Cross returning her to Dresden in July. She was ready to go to Israel in 1947, but her aunt and uncle convinced her to go to Australia arriving in January 1949. Her aunt and uncle were not initially permitted to join her due to his German citizenship until September. She lived with a different uncle and his wife but was not happy until she found a Jewish community.

She did not return to Germany for 28 years, and then one more time on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Theresienstadt.

In 1953, she married a Pole who had survived a number of camps in Eastern Europe; he died in 1985. They had two sons. She describes her life in Australia mentioning a few instances of anti-Semitism.