

Great-grandfather

Great-grandfather Tudorache Cozma, born on November 13, 1912, was one of the four children of the Cozma family, Tănase and Elena, a simple and modest family from the town of Bârlad, Tutova County. He attended only four primary classes at a school in his town. He had a tough childhood, as his mother passed away young at a very young age. She died at just 26, afflicted by an incurable disease. Like any other child, he was very fond of his mother. Being the eldest among his siblings and the only boy, he took on parental responsibilities. His father abandoned them, leaving him in the care of his grandmother. Thus, he had to support the family alongside his elderly grandmother, who lived to be 103 years old. He was a handsome man, 1.90 m tall, with dark hair, brown eyes, a penetrating gaze, a deep voice, and a robust build.

He was a skilled craftsman and a talented painter, who married my great-grandmother, Maria Abrudan, . She came from a Hungarian bourgeois family. During World War I, after Budapest was occupied by the Germans, who advanced into Transylvania, she was forced to flee with her mother. To save their lives, they had to leave everything behind: her father and brother were shot and killed. They left without any money and without any documents, which were burned. They crossed the Carpathians and settled in Bârlad, a completely new area for them. We do not know the exact year of her birth, as the documents were burned, but there was not much of a difference in age between her and her future husband. According to the civil registry document from Cluj, it is supposed that she was born in 1910. Upon reaching adolescence, she met Tudorache Cozma, whom she later married. After the wedding, great-grandfather and his wife Maria remained settled in Bârlad, where they had a family with four children: my grandmother Geta was the third child, born in 1943. Although his features seemed harsh, he was a gentle, loving man and a devoted husband and father. Despite the difficult times that followed, he took exceptional care of his family, ensuring that they lacked for nothing. He continued to look after his sisters, marrying them off and providing help whenever the situation demanded.

Between 1934 and 1936, at the age of 22, he was drafted for military service in the 3rd Gendarmerie Regiment as a rifleman. In February 1944, great-grandfather was dispatched in the 12th Dorobanți Regiment in Bârlad, again as a rifleman. Upon arriving at the front line in Odessa and then in Moscow, he became a prisoner of the USSR in August 1944, and from that moment, great-grandfather lost contact with his family. Alongside other Romanian soldiers, he became a prisoner in one of the Soviet camps. There, he befriended another soldier, who, unfortunately, did not survive. In the following period, the family had no information about his existence. One day, they were informed that he was missing, then declared dead, but the location was unknown. Upon reaching the camp, all the prisoners had their belongings and documents confiscated. They were subjected to hard labor, and food was rationed to almost nothing. The dormitory was a huge room where many prisoners were crammed, with no beds, and they were forced to sleep on cement covered with a layer of wet straw provided by the Russian soldiers.

It happened that one day, while they were taken out for forced labor, great-grandfather found a small silver icon without a frame, representing the Virgin Mary, in a field near a church. He picked it up, hid it, and smuggled it into the camp. In those conditions, where he no longer hoped for life or to see his family again, he realized that the only thing he could do was pray and that finding this icon was not a coincidence. He prayed continually, especially thinking of my grandmother Geta, who was just a few months old, and her siblings. He did not believe he would ever see their faces again or that he would survive. Great-grandfather recounted that many in the cell did not withstand the barbaric treatment, and he himself developed respiratory issues, which he battled until the end of his life. In August 1945, following the end of the war, the surviving prisoners were released, and great-grandfather returned home. As he walked down the cobbled street toward his house—because at that time, the streets were paved with river stones—he saw a little girl playing, he immediately recognized—his daughter, Geta. No one in the family expected this; great-grandfather had been declared dead. He suddenly appeared at the gate with his daughter in his arms. At that moment...Everyone froze, as if time had stopped, and they did not know how to react.

Once back home, he resumed his work at the IRC Constructorul Bârlad enterprise, where he had begun his apprenticeship in 1926 at just 14 years old. He was the sole provider for the family, as great-grandmother was a homemaker, taking care of the children. Due to from the drought in 1947 that affected eastern Romania, great-grandfather along with many others from Eastern Region of Romania, took the "train of hunger," which ran from Iași to Bucharest, thus ending up restoring buildings and churches in the Hunedoara area, ensuring a livelihood for those at home.

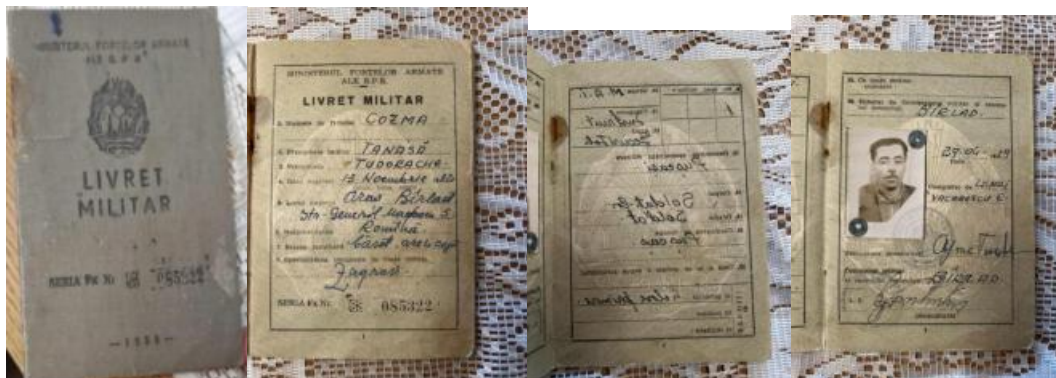
Although he traveled around the country for work, he was involved in the education of his children, wishing for them to attend school. Thus, one of his sons became a chemist engineer, another son inherited his skill and became a painter, the eldest daughter became an accountant, and my grandmother, after finishing high school, worked in the army at the ammunition depot, then as a telephone operator, and later as a storekeeper within the enterprise.

He lived under the leadership of Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej, whom he admired and considered close to the people, and from 1965 he experienced the era of Nicolae Ceaușescu, having a fairly good life with all the necessities for a decent living. However, during the communist regime it did not live as well as they say. After the 1980, rationalizations began, making living harder and harder. On the basis of a card, a person received per day half a loaf of bread, one kilogram of sugar, one kilogram of oil, half a kilogram of meat per month. Exotic fruits (oranges, bananas) were missing along with a lot of food. Thermal and electrical energy were also rationed. Every evening the light would stop for two hours, and the heat would receive two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening. Even if grandparents and great-grandparents think nostalgically about those times 'we believe that everything was not rosy at that time.

In the later part of his life, he battled lung cancer, which he developed due to his profession. In 1974, he retired but did not enjoy it for long, as he passed away just three years later, spending more time in hospitals than at home.



This is the icon of the Virgin Mary that great -grandpa found.





The military livret is the act that the great-grandfather received after his return from the war . In it writes all the information related to his departure to battle.



This is the birth bulletin (birth certificate).



This is the marriage certificate between great-grandmother and gret-grandfather.



In this picture there are my great-grandfather Tudorache, great-grandmother Maria and my mother Anca, their granddaughter, in their backyard.



This is my great-grandfather's workbook . It contains information about the jobs and the time he worked.



This is the ancestor's badge of war veterans.