



JACK AND BOB GRUNSCHLAG

In the forest above the small town of Bolechow in Poland – today the Ukraine – 16 Jews hid in a bunker in the forest for more than a year during 1943-4. Among them were Jack and Bob Grunschlag and their father, Moses. Their lifeline was Petro Ilnicki, a simple Ukrainian peasant, who not only risked his own life, but involved his children and sister in the rescue operation.

With money provided by Moses Grunschlag, Petro purchased rye and salt. The rye was roasted, then ground and boiled with water and salt into porridge. This would be their exclusive diet for a year! If Petro were to be seen buying quantities to feed 16 people, it would be obvious that he was hiding Jews. He bought the grain at distant markets, while his sister bought small quantities of salt in different places. At regular intervals, the strongest members of the group would make the gruelling 8 kilometre trek overnight from the bunker in the forest to Petro's farm and carry the precious provisions back.

When the fanatically anti-semitic Banderowcy Ukrainian partisans suspected Petro of hiding Jews, he did not give the group away, even when they beat him up. To allay suspicions, he made his eldest son, Vassily, a member of the Banderowcy. Ultimately, Vassily would pay for his membership with his life. For Jack and Bob, Petro Ilnicki is simply a hero.

*Courage to care*