In October 1943, life changed drastically for Agnes, her parents and three siblings. The Nazis, who had invaded Denmark three years earlier, started to round up the country’s 7,800 Jews, although most were lucky enough to escape by boat to Sweden. The Nazis captured Agnes’ aunt, uncle and four cousins and sent them to a concentration camp. Agnes’ family made two attempts to flee. The first time, approaching Nazi officers foiled their escape. The second time they succeeded and found refuge in the Swedish village of Lund, where her father worked as a butcher.

Suddenly, a sound we all dreaded interrupted the silence. It was the sound of boots, first at the main staircase of the building, then outside our apartment. It was a terrible noise from boots kicking the door. But then the noise continued upstairs, down again, and then it disappeared.

Agnes and her family returned to Denmark in June 1945 and she married in 1951. Her husband died just 13 years later, and she went to work in various jobs until she was 70. But with three daughters to raise and support, she was never able to build any savings. Agnes, now 84, received a one-time payment from the Claims Conference Hardship Fund to give her a savings cushion and ease financial worries in her later years. She also receives medicine and dental care funded by the Claims Conference.