EUGENE BOYKO,
12 years old

City of Zhashkiv,
Kyiv region

Eugene was awakened by his mother. He did not understand what was happening. It was still night outside, and there was a bright light in the window. Mom quickly led him into the hallway and took his little brother there. Somewhere there were loud explosions, and the mother, embracing the boys, said: "Sons, the war has begun. But don't be afraid, my dad and I are there. "

On the same day, to the sound of sirens, they went down to the basement for the first time. They hid in it for a week. It was damp and very cold there, so to save the children, the parents decided to take them to a safer place. Dad stayed to defend the house, and the boys and mom went to Western Ukraine.

Along the way, they met large convoys of cars, many checkpoints, and people in military uniforms with weapons in their hands. And they kept going and going... On the first night, we stopped in an old house where no one lived for a long time. "Mom, my brother, and I slept in jackets for the first time. We covered ourselves with a blanket we took with us. Then, from the cold and fear, it seemed to me that this night would never end, – says Eugene. But the boy tried not to show his true feelings because he remembered his father's instructions: "I had to become an adult because my father said that now I am older and I have to take care of my mother and younger brother until we meet again."

For reference

Boyko family:
Dad – Igor, businessman, 38 years old; mother – Eugenia, employee, 35 years old; son – Eugene, schoolboy, 12 years old; son – Vladislav, 4 years old.