

Mimi-Matilda Petkova's Veteran's Club Celebrates Its 25th Anniversary



This is a photo from our Veteran's Club celebrating its 25th anniversary. The picture was taken in Sofia. From right to left are: Penka Stancheva, behind her is Stefka Stankova, Hristina Petkova, behind her is Stefka Zmiyarova, I am next to her, then comes Velichka, Dobrina, to the very left is Pepa, the daughter of the doyen of the club, who recently turned 93 years. The boy standing behind is the grandson of the late Ramona. The war gave me many things. I spent 46 days and nights on the battlefield. First, it helped me reconsider my life. Secondly, it made me firmer: more honest, more sincere and stronger. It could sound vain, but it made me the only Jew in Bulgaria with two medals of valor. So, I also defended the Jewish lobby in that war. Not only me -there were 2,848 Jews, 48 of them died, 240 of them were women. I didn't emigrate, because we fought for Bulgaria. When I was at a symposium of Jewish medal holders 50 years after the end of World War II and Vivian, a medal holder from France, was called, the whole audience was clapping and shouting, 'Vi-vi-an! Vi-vi-an!' When Mimi Pizanti from Bulgaria was called, nobody clapped, but everyone stood up. For ten minutes they chanted: 'Bulgaria! Bulgaria!' [Mimi was associated with Bulgaria, which had saved the Jews within its territory.] That's why, my dear Bulgaria, you are my fatherland. It's true that Israel is the fatherland of my ancestors. Israel is the cradle of the Jewish people, but I was born here, my sisters and parents died here, my ancestors died here and my end will also be here.