

Grigoriy Fihman's Brother Abram Fihman



This is my brother Abram Fihman, sergeant of the Red army. This photo was taken in Brest in 1941. My brother sent us this photograph in one of his last letters few months before the Great Patriotic War began.

Abram was born in Odessa in 1916. He studied in a technical school in Odessa and then went to study in the Chemical Production College of Tinned Food Industry. In 1939, a month after WWII began he went to serve in the army. In 1940 Abram wrote us that his commandment decided to send him to study at a military school. We were happy for him, but some time later he wrote that he got a refusal for having relatives abroad. So he stayed to serve in Brest. A year later in late November he came home on leave to visit mother since she was very ill. She had a severe condition and a group of doctors issued a document confirming her hard health condition and on the basis of this document Abram got a leave. Abram came wearing his military uniform. I was turning 14 on those days, but we didn't have any celebration since my mother was dying. She survived. Doctors helped her. My father invited professor from Vinnitsa who came to Zhmerinka to provide medical treatment to the wife of a Party boss. It turned out that the diagnosis of local doctors was wrong.

Everything my brother told me about his military routines was interesting to me. He said that Brest was located on the banks of the Bug River and there were Germans on the opposite bank. Occasionally soldiers talked across the river. Germans shouted in German and Russian soldiers yelled back in Russian. There was nothing alarming about the situation there. A month later in May 1941 we received the last and alarming card from him. He wrote: 'You know, my dearest, that my service will be over in autumn. We shall see each other soon, but ask God that everything is all right'. This was all we had from him. Ten, fifteen, twenty days passed. Middle of June. We are waiting. Then 22 June came. Then it became clear to us that there would be no letter from him. Since Brest is Brest [The fortress with its Harrison few in number made a prolonged defense against Germans from 22 June through the twenties of July 1941]. However, according to the note my father received in 1943, Abram survived in Brest and was at the front for another year. He perished in Leningrad region in May 1942. He was 26 years old.