

Yakov Furman With His Front Comrades



This is I (second from right in the top line) and my front comrades are photographed after a victory over May 1945 in the exempted village in Lithuania.

In December 1941 Stalin issued the order on the forming of the 16th Lithuanian division. Lithuanians were drafted in the army from all ends of the country - from Siberia, Far East, Uzbekistan. My friends and I got the notice. In early January we were sent in Balakhna, Gorky oblast, where our division was being formed. I was assigned commander of the military platoon at once. We belonged to the sanitary unit. All top Lithuanian people came to us as the governmental representative office of Lithuania was in Moscow, and then in Kazan. Snezhkus and other said ardent words and then called upon resisting the fascists and taking revenge on our humiliated motherland. We lived in the barracks, dug-outs. We were well nourished. We stayed in the training division for a about a year.

In February 1943 Lithuanian division was taken to the hardest part - the vicinity of Kursk. There were a lot of casualties. Many people were severely wounded. We practically had no time to sleep. My young ladies, the aides who took the militaries from the battle field, often were in the leading edge. I had to make operations in the field conditions. The most important was to stop the hemorrhage, accompanying severe wounds. At times we had to cleanse up to 100 wounded. It was very hard at first as I was not used to that. It turned out that the combatant spirit considerably exceeded the level training and equipment. That is why so many people died. In a while I got used to inhuman loading both emotional and physical. I covered the territory of Byelorussian and Baltic fronts with my division. I went through entire Byelorussia and in summer 1944 I came in my Lithuania. I was lucky, I was slightly wounded for times. I got hand injury in the vicinity of Kursk. The doctor at the hospital said that I was very happy. I had stayed in the hospital in the period of utmost "heat". I got wounded for the second time near Vilnius in July 1944. I did not leave the leading edge. I wanted to go to Vilnius with my division. On the 13th of July I liberated Lithuanian capital. I was happy and frustrated at a time. I saw many survived prisoners of Vilnius ghetto and understood that my kin was most likely dead.

After Vilnius my division liberated very many towns and cities of Lithuanian and approached my native town- Siauliai. Battles were very severe. There was a lot of bloodshed. Fascists fought desperately understanding that it was their last bulwark in Lithuania. Then our division came in Klaipeda and was renamed into Klaipeda Red Banner division. When our division was approaching Siauliai, I and one of my compatriots asked the commander to send us in reconnaissance. We wanted to be the first to enter our town. I hoped to meet some of the people I knew to find out about my family. We came in a small house on the outskirts of the town, beyond the train station. A young pretty Lithuanian lady was there and gave us a warm welcome. We put the rations at the table- American canned products and sausage, and she suggested that we should stay overnight. She lived there with her parents. When Siauliai was liberated I headed farther with my division. I could not forget that sweet young lady.

I was in Klaipeda when the war was over. I was demobilized after that. I had many awards- Red Banner order, Military Merits Medal, Medal for Bravery and a lot of medals for liberation of the towns. In 1945 I came back in Siauliai straight after demobilization. I came to the lady, whom I liked so much and settled in her place. Appeared, that she also very much waited for me and very much worried about me, it was a love at first sight. I have lodged in her house. In a while we got registered our marriage.