

Isaac Klinger's Certificate For The Award Of The Medal 'For Defense Of The Caucasus'



This is my certificate for the award of the medal 'For Defense of the Caucasus', issued on 19th September 1944.

I remember very well the radio broadcast announcing the beginning of the Great Patriotic War on 22nd June 1941. At 2 o'clock in the morning on 23rd June a courier delivered a subpoena from the military registry office to my home. I was to be at the registry office in the Water Engineering College the following morning. Three days later we went to a military camp at some location in Odessa region by a passenger train.

On 30th August our unit was formed and we went to the front line near Uman [Cherkassy region] on trucks. Our group stopped in a small forest by the side of the road before Uman. Fascists began to fire at us. Some of my comrades were wounded and some were killed. Intelligence officers of our military unit said they saw the general that was commander of our unit surrender to fascists.

We moved closer to the front line and took our position in a glen. A day later another commanding officer arrived and an intelligence officer reported the general's surrender to him. He couldn't believe it was true, but then all ten officers confirmed that it had happened right before their eyes. The commanding officer ordered us to change our positions and thus we avoided many casualties. The traitor general knew our positions and soon German planes bombarded the glen.

I and a few other craftsmen were ordered to join a logistic unit in the army headquarters. A junior lieutenant ordered us to line up and began to ask questions: 'Are there any carpenters?' – I made a step forward and someone else did. 'Bricklayers? Roofers? Armorers?' In total he put together a group of ten craftsmen.

We crossed the Bug River. I was a joiner in a field engineering unit at the front under the command of Budyonny. He was appointed by Stalin, but he didn't last as a commander.

We were retreating to Novorossiysk where I joined Primorskaya army and stayed there until the end of the war in the Northern Caucasus and then in the Crimea. I was wounded twice. For me the war ended in Simferopol in 1945. I was first sergeant.