

Riva Pizman's Brother Mikhail Gershberg



My older brother Mikhail Gershberg. Mikhail was photographed after taking oath at his active military service. He sent this photograph to us at home. This photo was taken in Vinnitsa in 1941.

In 1921 my older brother Mikhail, Moishe named after grandfather Moishe Gershberg, was born. My older brothers studied in an 8-year Ukrainian school. When my brothers grew older, they started helping mama about the house. My brothers actually raised me. My brothers went shopping, cooked food, cleaned the apartment and looked after me. After finishing school Mikhail went to work as a shop assistant in a store. My brothers gave mama their wages.

My older brother Grigoriy was recruited to the army in 1940. In March 1941 my brother Mikhail was to go to the army. Some time before mama went to the military registry office to ask the commander to let one son stay at home considering that my father was paralyzed. The commander promised my mother that Grigoriy would be demobilized in June-July being the breadwinner in the family, but Mikhail had to go to the army. Before going to the army Mikhail bought me my first winter coat from thick coffee-colored woolen fabric. He wrote us from the army, and in each letter he added few words for me. He told me to study well at school and that he would work to help me to finish in college, when he returned, but this was not to be.

At the beginning the war Mikhail was sent to an artillery school. In 1942 he was sent to the front as a lieutenant, in 1944 he was promoted to the rank of captain and had a machine gun company under his command. We received the last letter from Mikhail's aide in July 1944. He wrote that Mikhail perished in Austria on 25 June 1944. He was inspecting the positions, when a shell splinter wounded him on the head. His aide wrote us that Mikhail was a nice person and a good commanding officer and that we could be proud of him.