

# Mina Smolianskaya's Brother Joseph And His Fellow Comrade



My brother Joseph (on the right) and his fellow comrade. My brother was in service in Brest, Byelorussia, and sent this photograph from there. Photo made in Brest in 1940, my brother is wearing a uniform of the time of the great patriotic War in the picture.

In 1932 famine. I was working and received bread coupons. My brother Joseph had finished lower secondary school and worked as a stableman in Chorniavka. It was easier to survive in towns while the situation in villages was very bad. My mother made skilly from dried leaves to save her children from starving to death. Our family survived. My mother sent my brother to me. I helped him to join the Jewish Komsomol organization of "Yermol" (one of numerous educational institutions to educate poor and illiterate young people from villages) and entered a two-year school of mechanics. He studied and lived there. He got a bed in a hostel and a uniform. Students got one meal per day at the canteen and bread coupons. Joseph was growing and was constantly hungry. I gave him my bread coupons, because I was afraid that he could take to stealing if he starved. I had a piece of mamalyga (editor's note: corn flour meal) from which I bit off small pieces to reduce the hunger.

In 1940 my brother was recruited to the army. He liked it there and he sent us a photograph from the army. Joseph served in Brest Byelorussia and perished during defense of the Brest fortress on the first day of the war 22 June 1941.