

Dimitri Kamyshan's Mother Olga Kamyshan



My mother, Olga Kamyshan, in 1940 in Kharkov. She sent this picture to me when I was at the front. This picture saved my life. I always kept this photo with me in my chest pocket. I was wounded during a battle near the village of Poltavka, Nikolaev region. I was wounded on my left hand first, and then something hit me on my chest. I didn't understand at first what it was, but in the hospital the doctors found out that it was a bullet that hit my mother's photograph leaving a bruise on my chest. It would have killed me if it hadn't been for my mother's picture.

My father met my mother, Olga Kamyshan, in 1923 when he was 21 and working as an accountant. My mother was 18 years old at the time. She was Russian and born in 1905. Her father, Peter Kamyshan, staff-captain in the tsarist army, was commander of a battalion. He perished in August 1914 during World War I. My grandmother, Lidia Kamyshan, came from a Russian aristocratic family.

When my mother met my father in 1923 her family told her to leave, because they weren't going to accept a Jew as a member of their family. My father's family gave her shelter. My mother was a very pretty and nice girl, and my father's parents liked her a lot.

In 1940 my mother was notified that her mother had died. We went to the funeral. My mother used to say that if her father had been alive he wouldn't have chased her away from home regardless of her marrying a Jew, a Greek or a Tartar.