

Jacob Mikhailov With His Front-Line Friends



This is me (in the center) with my front-line friends, my best front-line comrade Vladimir Bishnar is to the left, Slavik

(I do not remember his surname) is to the right. The picture was taken as a keepsake at the beginning of May 1945.

There are the following medals on my tunic: an Order of the Red Banner and an Order of the Great Patriotic War, 2nd class.

The picture was taken in Germany.

For my friends and I the war was over not on 9th, but on 12th May 1945.

The commandment was apprised that the German squad under the command of colonel-general Sherner

was trying to break through to the Americans.

Our front was to block their way. Part of our gun-machine battalion captured some hamlet, located 40 kilometers south-east of Berlin.

We didn't take part in the liberation of that hamlet.

Our squad, headed by the operational squad of the regiment, walked across the field and blocked the road.

There were knolls ahead of us and shooting started from there.

There must have been a spotter there, who spotted the fire.

The shells were blasted behind us, then in front of us.

I understood that we had come into a plug as they say in artillery.

There were three more soldiers with me.

The shell landed right between us. I fell down after the blast.

I was in a jersey and the cotton wool was erased by the shell fragment and my back was scolded.

The map case was thrown away by the blast.

The other three soldiers were killed. They perished on 12th May 1945.

The regiment commander told me to submit a report for those killed in the last battle

to be posthumously awarded and for their relatives to be apprised of that.
One of those soldiers was my friend Vladimir Bishnar,
a handsome good-humored Moldovan, only two years older than me.
I couldn't write to his family, just couldn't stand the thought.
I wanted to go to Moldova after demobilization and tell his family what
a remarkable man Vladimir had been and how he had perished and my witnessing it.
One thing is to write a letter, going to see them was a different thing. I didn't manage to do that.
I kept my map case like the apple of my eye as it contained the addresses and pictures,
and it was stolen during my trip on the train. There was nothing I regretted more in my life.
That is why I couldn't meet up with Vladimir's family.

During the war I was awarded with the Order of the Red Star and the Medal for Valor.
Besides I got many medals for the defense and liberation of many cities.
I was awarded with an Order of the Great Patriotic War for my last battle on 12th May 1945.