

Jacob Mikhailov With His Comrade Nikolay Tolkachev



This is me (to the left), with the comrade from my regiment, former company sergeant-major Nikolay Tolkachev.

The picture was taken on 9th May 2004 near the Grave of the Unknown Soldier in Moscow.

These are my awards: from left to right and from top to bottom. To the left on the jacket there are an honorable Guards insignia, two Orders of the Red Star, an Order of the Great Patriotic War, 2nd class, a Medal for Valor. To the right there are medals for capture and liberation of cities and jubilee medals on the occasion of Soviet Army Day and Victory Day.

On 9th May, Victory Day our whole family goes to the Grave of Unknown Soldier, where we meet with front-line soldiers.

My grandson Artyom has attended since the age of three.

During perestroika the [Moscow] Council of the Jewish War Veterans was founded in Moscow. I became its member. It was about 15 years ago.

I have been the presidium member of this council for many years, and worked in the group of assistance to the needy.

I paid a lot of attention to seeking those who needed help. Then, when I came back home, I rejected that position.

I cannot just be there and do nothing. I had no time for that.

The first time I came to the synagogue was also during perestroika. There was only one synagogue for the entire city of Moscow after the war.

The most ancient synagogue, and the only acting synagogue during the Soviet regime, was located in the heart of Moscow, on Spasoglinichevskiy Lane.

The synagogue was ceremoniously opened in 1989. Now it is called 'Sinagoga na gorke' ['Synagogue on the hill' in Russian].

Then another one was restored at Malaya Bronzy. I've been very aloof from religion all my life. It was the way I was brought up by my parents and it was too late for me to be re-nurtured. I got to know our rabbi.

He is a very interesting man and we both enjoy each other's company.

We don't broach religious subjects, there are other common topics we find.