

Faina Minkova's Father Yuzik Minkov With His Comrades



My father Yuzik Minkov (on the right) at the front in 1944. He returned there after his stay in hospital. My father mailed this photo to my mother along with his first letter from the front when he found out her address in Kuibyshev. On 22nd June 1941 [when the Great Patriotic War began] my father was taking a course in medical treatment at a sanatorium. He was taken from the sanatorium to the front. He was a political officer and an NKVD employee. He was appointed a SMERSH [acronym for 'Death to Spies', internal security service division]. But my father wasn't just a clerk sitting in the office. He spent a lot of time at the frontline where he was severely wounded in 1942. He had multiple wounds on his chest, abdomen, arms and legs. He was lying on the ground for over six hours. There was a German sniper on a tree. A star on my father's cap reflected sunrays and the sniper kept shooting until it got dark. Only then my father's comrades got a chance to get him out of there. He was taken to a hospital behind the lines in Baku where he had surgery. It was a miracle that he survived. He had his ribs removed on one side and there were big scars on his chest. He lost a lot of blood. He was in constant pain. There were no analgesics available, and his doctor gave instruction to nurses to give him alcohol anytime he would wake up. Later my father never drank alcohol. He used to say that he had had too much alcohol. My father stayed in hospital from December 1942 till February 1944. Then he was sent to the Caucasus to complete his treatment. He didn't have any information about his family. He didn't even know about the baby. It took him two years to find his family. He got information in 1944 saying that they were in the Ural. The same year he returned to his military unit at the front. In 1945 my father got an assignment in Japan and then in China. [This was during the war with Japan.]