

## Lev Mistetskiy With His Friend



This is me (on the left) with my fellow student. We were photographed after finishing the Military Communications School in Leningrad [today St. Petersburg]. I wanted to send this photo to my older brothers and sister, but I didn't know their address. There are cracks in the picture from my carrying it in my chest pocket. This photo was taken in Leningrad in 1943. I entered the Leningrad Military Communications School evacuated to Uralsk in 1942. We had advanced eight-month training. After finishing the school we went to the front. I was awarded the rank of sergeant and sent to Sokolniki near Moscow. A captain came to our barrack and read the order that I and a few others were appointed communications operators in the 15th fighting engineering brigade. Two days later we were to get a bus to drive us to our point of destination. One of our group told the captain that he was from Moscow and that his son and wife were there and asked permission to go and see them. The captain said it was all right, but he wanted to join him. I went with them. He was a handsome man, older than me. We visited his family. I am telling you this because I met with this man several times afterward, but at that time we were in different divisions. I was sent to Domodedovo near Moscow where I took up three-month field engineering training. There were five battalions in this engineering brigade. I was appointed chief of communications of the 73rd battalion. We got poor food and I was always hungry. Three months later we were sent to Lebedin, Sumy region, Ukraine [300 km from Kiev], by train. From there we covered almost 400 kilometers to the town of Kanev on the Dnieper [100 km from Kiev], to the front line in late September 1943 where we joined the 47th army. I was the youngest radio operator and they sent me to the hardest points. Our division was heading to Kiev. In late October 1943 our tanks entered Darnitsa, the left bank suburb of Kiev. I was in a tank with my radio. We crossed the Dnieper and started demining of the town. We were to support save entrance of the 3rd guard tank army. I was also involved in the demining. After the liberation of the town we moved in the direction of Vinnytsa: Fastov, Kazatim and further on.