

Mimi-Matilda Petkova And Fellow Soldiers Before Leaving For The Front



This photo was taken on 10th October 1944 in Vidin, in front of the command headquarters, when we were leaving for the front. Leon Moreno is the one with the white shirt and cap, to the right of him is Leon Samuilov, behind Leon Moreno is Dr. Kohen, I am in the lower row to the left. The others are members of a volunteer's company organized at the 'Georgi Benkovski' squad. I went to the front when I was 17 years and three days old. The Germans withdrew on 5th September. The partisan squad climbed down on 8th September, smashed the prison gates and so my father was freed. It was such a happy moment, we all gathered on the square, all people regardless which party they belonged to. It was 10th September 1944. Then we heard that the Germans were coming back. They had forgotten to blow up the ferry over the Danube, to Calafat. And the Soviet army was on the Danube border. The commander of the partisan squad - Ivan Vitkov Bakov summoned us, 'We have to organize a volunteers' team until the Soviet armies come and the situation in the regiments is normal again. You have to stop the Germans!' We had the third Drinski regiment, but they did not go then. I have a big sin with regard to my parents: not only did I run away from them to go to the front, but also I didn't write them a single line. In the fights in Yugoslavia a Jewish girl died. She was from Silistra. Her name was Solchi. The kulaks had killed her husband and son. I was 17 years old then; she was 25, that is, eight years older than me. They called her 'the Jewish girl'. They called me '6 by 35' because I was small and I carried a lady's gun [a smaller gun]. A friend of my father went to Vidin and my father asked him about me. 'Buko, they killed a Jewish girl, but I don't know her name?' Then they recited the Kaddish for me at the synagogue, believing that I was dead.