

Ayzik Furman



Ayzik Furman, my father was the senior son of Mendel Furman; he was born in 1909 in Belarus. Until 1929 he lived in Verkudy village in Belarus [40 km to the north from Lepel, Vitebsk region - at present it does not exist], two years he studied at Jewish school, later he lived some time in Ulla village (he worked there in fishing cooperative association).

In 1930s my father arrived to Leningrad. He was a professional soldier; he served in Ossinovaya Roscha in signal battalion as a political adviser at the battalion commander. He participated in the war with Finland and was awarded the order of [the Combat] Red Banner.

The history of acquaintance of my parents was very simple. Actually, they were related to each other. Avraham Shukhman, my mother's father had a sister, who was a wife of Mendel and mother of my father. I.e. my father's mother was a sister of Avraham Shukhman, my mother's father. When a girl, she (my father's mother) was also Shukhman.

They also became related the following way: Bassya, a daughter of my father's mother, was brought up in the family of my mother's father. And certainly, brothers often visited their sister Bassya in that family, they all were like relatives.

And so my father, visiting his sister Bassya, fell in love with my mum, and so did my mum; and their relatives could not dissuade them from this.

So against all dissuasions, they decided to get married. By that time my daddy was already a professional soldier, and they went to Belarus to get married. I keep their marriage certificate. It

happened in 1934, and I was born in 1935.

Having got married, my parents lived in Ossinovaya Roscha. We lived there happily. There were four of us: mother, father, me and my brother Mikhail, who was born on December 20th, 1939.

We moved to Ossinovaya Roscha almost before the others, the military camp was under construction at that time, and their house was still damp, when they moved in. Our family occupied two rooms in one of the apartments.

There was also a small room near the kitchen, where father's aide-de-camp lived. We also had two neighbors, also military men, but I know nothing about them. And in this house we lived until 1941, when the war burst out.

When the war broke out, father left for the frontline with his unit on the first day. His unit was already mobilized and left the Ossinovaya Roscha. They moved towards the border with Finland which fought against the USSR together with Germany (6). We stayed in Leningrad in Ossinovaya Roscha.

In July 1941 father's unit was transferred from one location to the other and father managed to visit us together with his privates. People were already being evacuated from Leningrad. Germans were quite close to the city at that time and last trains were leaving.

Father managed to evacuate us to the Gorky region [region in the basin of Volga river with a center in the town of Gorky, located 1,000 km to the south-east of Leningrad], where his aide-de-camp's mother lived.

We came to relatives of father's adjutant to Vad village of Gorky region. But that place seemed to my mum to be very much out of the way, because there was no place to live and she could not get a job. We could not even understand the dialect people spoke!

They added the word "chai" [in English: probably] after almost each word, when they said something, "Would you probably go there? Or would you probably not?" I remember how mother laughed after the war, sometimes saying, "Would you probably go there?" There were few people there.

Only primary school was available. Then mum got registered at local military enlistment office, and the local commander sent us to Vad village - a more civilized place, center of the district. At first mother worked in the collective farm, doing temp work, and then a military hospital evacuated from Ukraine appeared in Vad. And my mum went there for work.

At first she was a nurse (she had no special medical education), later she was taken to operating-room (my mother was very sociable and clever woman). An old professor (I do not remember his surname) was very nice to her and took care of her. He knew that she had three little children, who suffered from hunger.

At the hospital they gave her some food, and she did her best to bring it to us, children. And that professor saw her to be hungry and shared his ration with her (and so did his wife).

I remember that mother brought home used bandages from bandaging room. He gave it to her, advised to boil thoroughly. Mum used them to make clothes. He also tried to give her a glass or a spoon when the opportunity occurred.

In evacuation, my mum received letters from front line from my daddy - the last letter came in August 1942. I keep it as a family relic, because it is the last piece of news from my father. It was written in pencil on a small sheet of paper.

Having written that letter, he got lost, and we did not receive any more letters from him and knew nothing about him. Time passed and we got to know that he perished. He participated in the war with Finland and was awarded the order of the Red Banner for this military campaign, I have a photo of him with it. He perished in 1941 - approximately in September - his last letter was dated from August 1941. He was killed at the front, in the battle of Leningrad.