

## Efim Finkel



I, Efim Finkel, student of mechanic school in S. Razdelnaya. The photo was made in Razdelnaya Odessa region, 1936. In 1935 I finished lower secondary school - 7 years. I went to a mechanic school after finishing secondary school. I had a technical mind and wanted to continue my studies. We studied general subjects like in secondary schools and had professional training. We were trained to operate and repair tractors and combine units. I liked what we were doing. I finished mechanic school in 1938 with honors for successes in my study and was sent to a higher mechanic school in Teplitsa village in about 30 kms from Razdelnaya where I was to study for 3 years and could come home on vacations and holidays. In May 1941 after finishing my 2nd year at school I came home on vacation. My brother studied at the trade school of Odessa mechanic plant after finishing lower secondary school. He lived in a hostel for free since it belonged to the plant in

Odessa and was planning to come home for vacation when the Great Patriotic War began. In the afternoon of 22 June 1941 Razdelnaya was already bombed by German planes. We knew from Molotov's speech on the radio at noon that Germany attacked the Soviet Union. We knew about the war in Europe, but it seemed to be so far away from us. The German invasion was a nightmare for us. I cannot understand how it happened that Germany was pulling its troops and armaments to the border of the Soviet Union and nobody paid any attention to this. This couldn't have been completed in one night! The war took us unaware. We didn't know what to do. There was confusion in Razdelnaya on the first days of the war. In few days mobilization began. I received a subpoena from the military registry office. All draftees were sent to Bolgrad in 70 kms from Razdelnaya where military units for the front were formed.