Bertha Trachtenbroit's Brother Leonid Trachtenberg With His Friends

This is my brother Leonid (standing) and his friend and fellow student Mikhail Shichtman and his fiancee (sitting). The photo was taken in Rostov in September, 1941, before they were sent to the front in Northern Caucasus.

In 1939 my brother finished secondary school. He was going to enter the Philology Faculty at the university. However, my brother and his classmate Mikhail Shichtman were requested to come to the military registry office where they were offered to go to the Navy College. This was the so-called Voroshylov admission. For the sake of their future career they couldn't refuse this offer. They both entered the Higher Navy College in Sevastopol and finished 2 years before 1941 when the war began. My brother bought me a knitted woolen shawl from his first stipend. I still have it. Two or three days before the war started my brother's training boat stopped in Odessa and we managed to see him. He came home for the last time in the evening of 21 June.

In 1941 my brother was in a marine unit in the Northern Caucasus. In March 1942 he was severely wounded in his chest. He stayed in hospital for 8 months. After he left the hospital he was sent to study in the Navy College in Baku. He studied there in 1943-1945.