

Alexandr Nepomniaschy



I, Alexandr (Shaya) Nepomniaschy, on the 9th of May, Victory Day. Photo made in Chernovtsy in 2002.

22 June 1941 I was summoned to the recruitment office where they told me that I was to mobilize to the front. I was given the rank of senior political officer that was equivalent to the rank of captain. I was sent to infantry division 823 of the South-Western Front near Kiev. I was appointed as artillery unit 823 deputy commanding officer for technical services. This regiment was defending Kiev and the suburbs. The Germans were burning haystacks where soldiers were hiding. I was captured as well as many of my comrades. All prisoners-of-war were taken to the collective farm yard in Bykovnia near Kiev. They gave the order for "Yuden" - Jews to make a step forward. One Jew came out of the line and told the others to do the same. He said that the Germans were a civilized nation and did not intend to do any harm to the Jews. Other Jews began to step forward. I stayed where I was. Then one German began to walk between the lines looking at us. He came near me and asked whether I was a Jew. I said "No, no - Caucasus" This saved me. Almost all Jews stepped forward, because nobody knew that they were executing Jews. There were over 50 Jews: a general, few colonels, officers and privates. They were told to take off their clothes and then they were shot.

I take an active part in the Jewish life. I founded "Veteran Club" in Hesed. I am a honored Chairman there and make reports on participation of Jews in the war. Many people are of the opinion that Jews weren't at the front. It is not true. Many Jews were struggling heroically and many perished at the front and in partisan units. People do not forget about the war and I do not forget it either. We were at the war, many people perished and I believe that my biggest award is that I'm still alive.