

Yakov Voloshyn



This is me after my release from the hospital where I had to stay after I got shell-shocked and returned to Kiev. This photo was taken on 6th May 1944. My last day at the front was a battle for a hill in late fall of 1943. This was Ponyri station, near Oriol, in Russia. This was an important hill. I went to fix communications. Our battalion commander needed communication and I was there to provide it. At that time the Germans got a new powerful cannon called "Big Bertha". It fired not far from me and from then on I didn't remember anything. I regained consciousness in the medical unit. I couldn't hear or talk. I was severely shell-shocked and was sent to a hospital in the rear. I

was in a hospital in Tambov, then in Michurinsk and from there I was taken to Ufa in Bashkiria. I didn't have any appetite and didn't eat. I suffered from headaches. My wife Lilia was notified that I was in hospital. The chief of this hospital issued a permit for my wife and son to come to see me. When they arrived they were accommodated in a room in the hospital. They stayed with me two weeks. Of course, my mood improved after they came. I began to eat and my condition was improving. I couldn't talk, though and we communicated in gestures. I stayed six months in this hospital. In March 1944 they released me and told me to go home. Kiev was already liberated. I got a food package and tickets to go home. I hadn't yet recover my speech at the time and often helped myself with gestures to help people understand me. In 1945 the registry office notified me that my military unit included me in the lists for an Order of the Red Star for the battle for Ponyri station. So I had managed to fix communications somehow.