

## Susanna Sirota



I as a cadet of a partisan school. This photo was taken in Moscow in 1942.

On the eve of 1942 instructors from a military unit visited our school. There were radio operators showing us how radio equipment worked. I got very interested in it and they taught me the Morse code: Dot-dash: dot is 'ti,' dash - 'ta.' Ti-ti-ta is 'a', tititita is 'b' and so on. I was so eager to get to the front to defend my Motherland that it took me no time to learn it. I was dreaming of meeting my fiancé Kolia. I always had this code tapping in my head.

By spring I finished my tractor driving training. I and another girl decided to walk to the district committee in the nearest town of Uralsk to ask them to send us to the front. They looked at us as if we were crazy. The local Kazakh population plotted whatever occurred to them to avoid the army service. They accepted us immediately. My mother didn't mind. She wanted me to get out of that village. Later my mother realized that it was dangerous at the front. She walked with us trying to talk me out of it, but it was too late: we had taken vows. We volunteered to the front.

Since I had school education and knew Morse code and was a sports girl they sent me to a school of radio operators in Moscow. This was the Moscow School of Master Sergeant Radio Operators in Moscow region that was recently liberated from Germans. It was a school for girls and there were many Jewish girls in it. I enjoyed studying in this school and found it interesting. I was a head girl in physical culture classes and was an active student. We were hungry and ate heartily only when we were on duty in the kitchen once a month, but we were cheerful and joyful.