

Michal Nadel With His Friends In Hospital In Cracow



This is the photo of me and my friends from military hospital in Cracow. The photo was taken in 1945 by some photographer but I don't remember his name.

In 1944 I was moved from Lublin to Przemysl, and then to Cracow to an Officer School. One night a group of Germans came to our area from Slovakia. I was hit with tiny shrapnel, I fell on the ground and was run over by a military vehicle, a heavy Studebaker - an American vehicle, weighing 10 tons. That's no joke. The Germans were gone, they escaped. Our cars were nearby, they took me there wrapped in a blanket. When they touched me - horrible pain, terrible. The doctors said my pelvis and lower vertebrae were broken in 8 places. The spinal cord was damaged. My abdomen was open. After the surgery they couldn't put me in a cast. Peritonitis developed. I was on morphine all the time. After some time I got pneumonia in both lungs. Every single one of these illnesses was enough to kill. I have documents for all that.

It was February or March 1945. I still had fever, I was really just waiting for death in the hospital. There was a young man from Lwow among us [first from right], a petty thief or something like that. They said he shot his finger only to get to the hospital. He was our good spirit. He would steal food from the nuns who took care of us. One night I felt really bad. That guy brought me a white tablet then. I passed out unconscious after it, but woke up in the morning and then there was a breakthrough. Everything went away. The fever went down, I started to improve. The doctor told me not to thank him: 'God, providence, your organism - maybe that helped, but not medicine. Medicine was helpless here' - he said.

For a long time afterwards I couldn't remain standing up. I got around in a so called tram-way. I folded a blanket several times and slid on it on the floor - the floors were polished. Once a new doctor came by, an officer released from a camp. He saw me how I was riding on the blanket and asked: 'What's that circus?!', I said 'No, professor, it's a tram-way, not a circus'. And he said:

'Circus! Go back to your room!' He came by after a day or two and said: 'Sit up. Stand up'. I said I couldn't, because I couldn't. I tried, but I couldn't. Then he gave me his hand and I got up. Straight. I was shocked. He told me to stand up several times a day and look out the window. I started doing that.

I began walking with crutches, then with a cane. When I was able to walk, half a year passed, in 1946 they sent me from Cracow to a military health resort in Kudowa Zdroj.